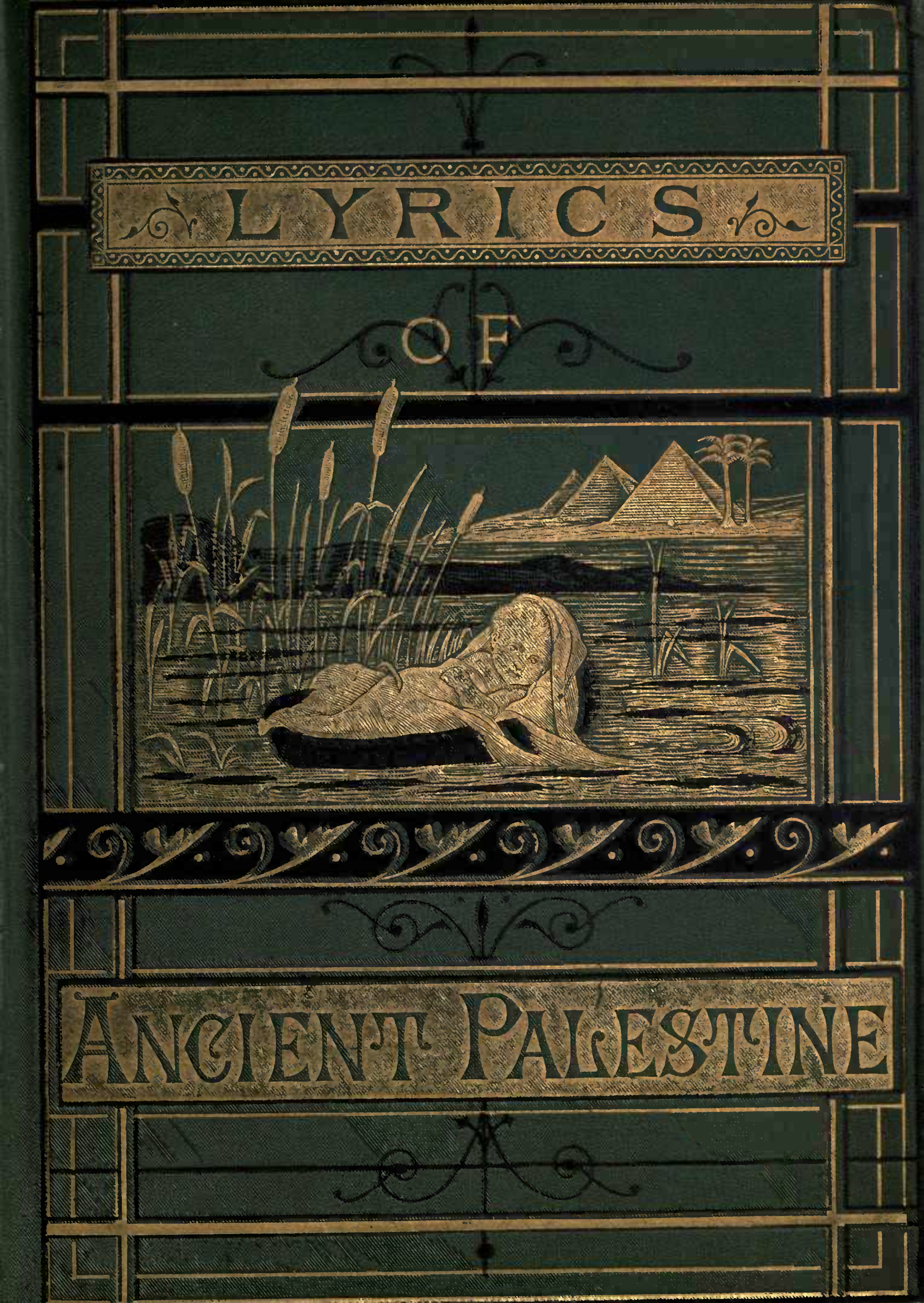
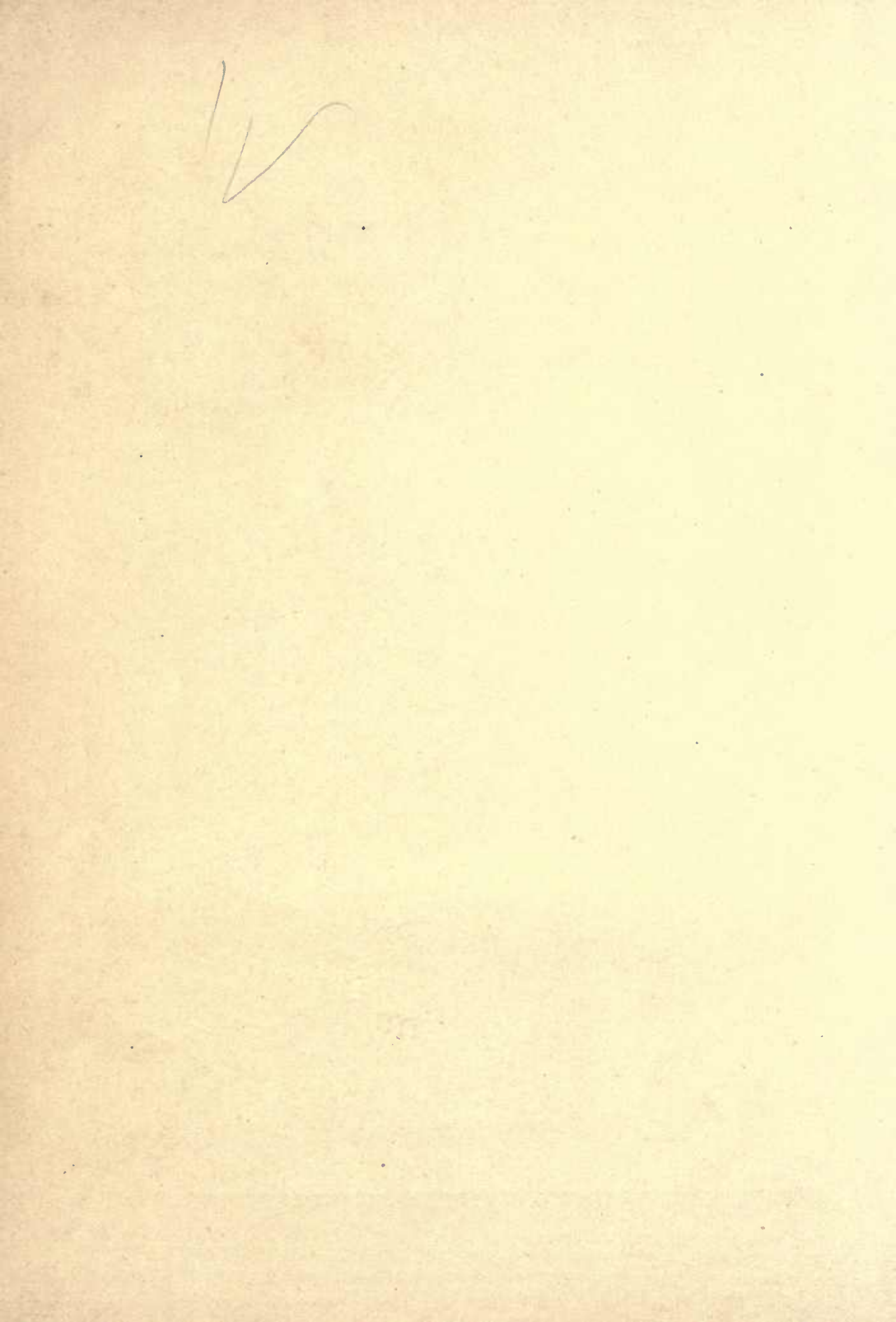

LYRICS
OF
ANCIENT PALESTINE

F. M. Evill

LYRICS

OF

ANCIENT PALESTINE.



M. Gaster

LYRICS

OF

ANCIENT PALESTINE.

POETICAL AND PICTORIAL

Illustrations of Old Testament History.

The Illustrations drawn by A. de Neuville, P. Skelton, J. Wolf, J. D. Watson, J. Mahoney, C. J. Staniland, and others.



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Illustrations.



LYRICS OF ANCIENT PALESTINE.



Paradise.

ADAM all day 'mid odorous garden bowers
Had lightly toiled—while many a tender word,
With murmur of the brook and song of bird,
Fell on Eve's ear at work amongst her flowers;
When lo! where grove of pine and cedar towers,
As with a gentle breeze the leaves are stirred,
And walking in the garden God is heard,
With voice of love charming those evening hours.
With conscious innocence, and hand in hand,
That goodly pair approach their awful Friend,
Like children with beloved father stand;
Then at His feet in adoration bend.
O golden age! O days of heaven on earth!
When life was piety and labour mirth.

Rev. R. Wilton.

Morning Hymn in Paradise.

THESE are Thy glorious works, Parent of Good!
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then,
Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these Thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels; for ye behold Him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle His throne rejoicing; ye in heaven:
On earth, join all ye creatures, to extol
Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without end.
Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet, praise Him in thy sphere,
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul,
Acknowledge Him thy greater, sound His praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
And when high noon has gained, and when thou fall'st.
Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fliest
With the fixed stars, fixed in their orb that flies;
And ye five other wand'ring fires, that move
In mystic dance, not without song, resound
His praise, who out of darkness called up light.

Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth
Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run
Perpetual circle, multiform; and mix,
And nourish all things; let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or grey,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author rise;
Whether to deck with clouds th' uncoloured sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
Rising or falling still advance His praise.
His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and ye that warble, as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs warbling, tune His praise.
Join voices all, ye living souls; ye birds,
That singing up to Heaven's gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes His praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,
Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught His praise.
Hail, universal Lord! be bounteous still
To give us only good; and if the night
Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.

Milton.

Paradise Lost.

ALAS! how changed from bowers of Paradise
That desolate region, overgrown with thorn
And thistle rank,—a trackless waste forlorn,
Unblest by God, o'erarched by sullen skies
There stand that guilty pair, now sadly wise,
Their hearts with grief, their feet with briars torn;
Vainly their faded innocence they mourn,
And towards the gatės of Eden turn their eyes.
No more to see the beauty and the bloom
Of that blest garden was to sinners given;
To weep and labour wearily their doom,
Out of God's holy, blissful presence driven,
Till through life's sorrows, and death's dust and gloom,
By woman's promised seed they enter Heaven.

Rev. R. Wilton.

The Fall.

FOE of mankind! too bold thy race;
Thou runn'st at such a reckless pace,
Thine own dire work thou surely wilt confound:
'Twas but one little drop of sin
We saw this morning enter in,
And lo! at eventide the world is drowned.

See here the fruit of wandering eyes,
Of worldly longings to be wise,
Of Passion dwelling on forbidden sweets:
Ye lawless glances, freely rove;
Ruin below and wrath above
Are all that now the wildering fancy meets.

Lord, when in some deep garden glade,
Of Thee and of myself afraid,
From thoughts like these among the bowers I hide,
Nearest and loudest then of all
I seem to hear the Judge's call:—
"Where art thou, fallen man? Come forth, and be thou tried!"

Trembling before Thee as I stand,
Where'er I gaze on either hand
The sentence is gone forth, the ground is curst:
Yet mingled with the penal shower
Some drops of balm in every bower
Steal down like April dews, that softest fall and first.

If filial and maternal love[1]
Memorial of our guilt must prove,
If sinful babes in sorrow must be born,
Yet, to assuage her sharpest throes,
The faithful mother surely knows
This was the way Thou cam'st to save the world forlorn.

If blessed wedlock may not bless[2]
Without some tinge of bitterness
To dash her cup of joy, since Eden lost,
Chaining to earth with strong desire
Hearts that would highest else aspire,
And o'er the tenderer sex usurping ever most;

1 "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children."
2 "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Yet by the light of Christian lore
'Tis blind Idolatry no more,
But a sweet help and pattern of true love,
Showing how best the soul may cling
To her immortal Spouse and King,
How He should rule, and she with full desire approve.

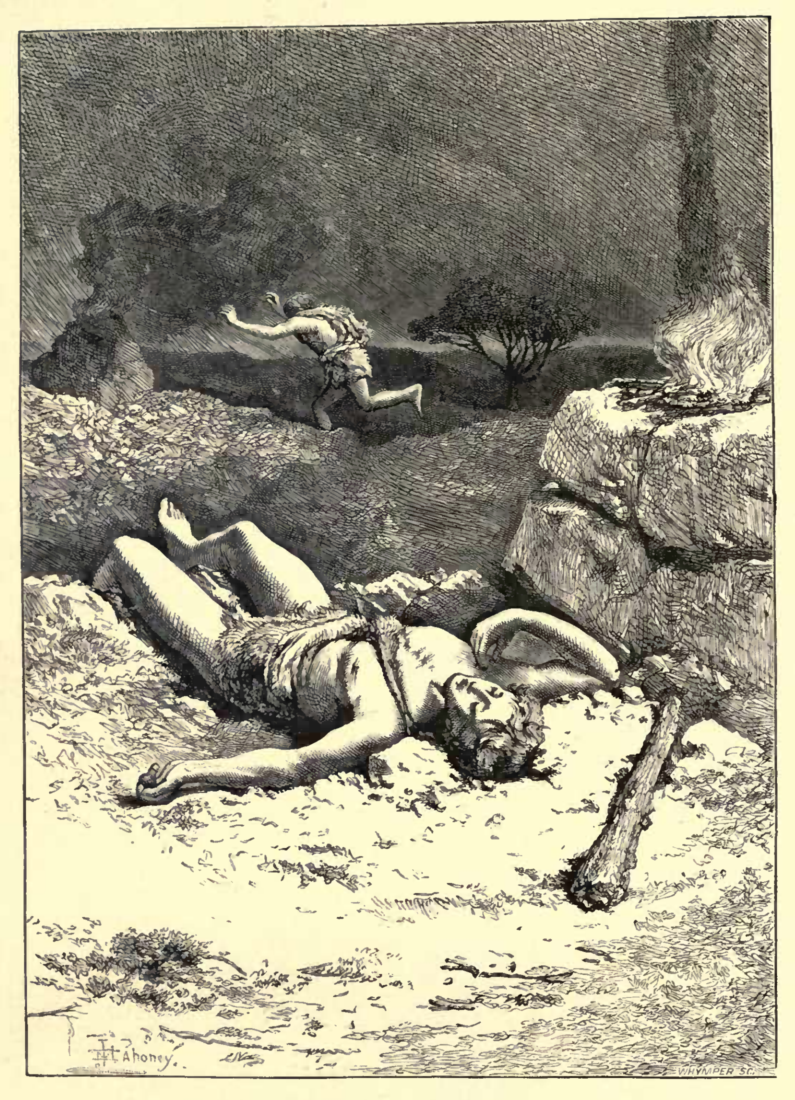
If niggard Earth her treasures hide,[1]
To all but labouring hands denied,
Lavish of thorns and worthless weeds alone,
The doom is half in mercy given
To train us in our way to Heaven,
And show our lagging souls how glory must be won.

If on the sinner's outward frame[2]
God hath impressed His mark of blame,
And even our bodies shrink at touch of light,
Yet Mercy hath not left us bare:
The very weeds we daily wear[3]
Are to Faith's eye a pledge of God's forgiving might.

And oh! if yet one arrow more,[4]
The sharpest of th' Almighty's store,
Tremble upon the string—a sinner's death,—
Art Thou not by to soothe and save,
To lay us gently in the grave,
To close the weary eye, and hush the parting breath?

Keble.

[1] "Cursed is the ground for thy sake."
[2] "I was afraid, because I was naked."
[3] "The Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them."
[4] "Thou shalt surely die."



THE DEATH OF ABEL.

By that first death a martyr's crown was won.
He died—but, like a vapour upward flying,
Caught the slant beams of our Unrisen Sun,
And he, being dead, yet speaks of Jesus dying.

Eden and Gethsemane.

SWEET Eden was the arbour of delight,
Yet in its honey flowers our poison blew:
Sad Gethseman the bower of baleful night,
Where Christ a health of poison for us drew,
Yet all our honey in that poison grew:
So we from sweetest flower could suck our bane,
And Christ from bitter venom could again
Extract life out of death, and pleasure out of pain.

Giles Fletcher.

Abel's Sacrifice.

AN altar rude of turf meek Abel piled,
And laid a spotless lamb on the cleft wood,
And sprinkled round the typifying blood;
While on that shadow God looked down and smiled.
Then Cain arose with envious anger wild,
That swept along like an unbridled flood,
Drowning all fear of God or thought of good,
And with a brother's blood his hands defiled.
Earth shuddered when that cruel deed was done,
Heaven heard that righteous blood in silence crying;
By that first death a martyr's crown was won.
He died—but, like a vapour upward flying,
Caught the slant beams of our Unrisen Sun,
And he, being dead, yet speaks of Jesus dying.

Rev. R. Wilton.

Methuselah.

"And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: *and he died.*"

And was this all? He died! he who did wait
The slow unfolding of centurial years,
And shake that burden from his heart which turns
Our temples white; and in his freshness stand,
Till cedars mouldered, and firm rocks grew grey—
Left he no trace upon the page inspired,
Save this one line—*He died!*

Perchance he stood
Till all who in his early shadow rose,
Faded away, and he was left alone;
A sad, long-living, weary-hearted man,
To fear that death, remembering all beside,
Had sure forgotten him.

Perchance he roved
Exulting o'er the ever-verdant vales,
While Asia's sun burned fervid on his brow;
Or 'neath some waving palm tree sate him down,
And in his mantling bosom nursed the pride
That mocks the pale destroyer, and doth think
To live for ever.

Yet whatsoe'er his lot, in that dim age
Of mystery, when the unwrinkled world had drunk
No deluge cup of bitterness, whate'er
Were earth's illusions to his dazzled eye,
Death found him out at last, and coldly wrote,

With icy pen on life's protracted scroll,
Nought but this brief unflattering line—*He died.*

Ye gay flower-gatherers on Time's crumbling brink,
This shall be said of you, howe'er ye vaunt
Your long to-morrows in an endless line—
Howe'er amid the gardens of your joy
Ye hide yourselves, and bid the pale king pass,
This shall be said of you at last—He died:
Oh, add one sentence more—*He lived to God!*

Mrs. Sigourney.

Enoch walking with God.

GEN. v. 22; HEB. xi. 5, 6; JUDE 14, 15.

HE walked with God, by faith, in solitude,—
At early dawn or tranquil eventide,
In some lone leafy place he would abide
Till his whole being was with God imbued:
He walked with God amid the multitude,—
No threats or smiles could his firm soul divide
From that beloved Presence at his side,
Whose still small voice silenced earth's noises rude.
Boldly abroad to men he testified
How "the Lord cometh," and the judgment brings;
Gently at home he trained his "sons and daughters;"
Till, praying, a bright chariot he espied,
Sent to translate him as on angels' wings,
To walk with God beside Heaven's "living waters."

Rev. R. Wilton.



The Return of the Dove.

SWEET Dove! the softest, steadiest plume
In all the sunbright sky,
Brightening in ever-changeful bloom
As breezes change on high;—

Sweet Leaf! the pledge of peace and mirth,
"Long sought, and lately won,"
Bless'd increase of reviving Earth,
When first it felt the Sun;—

Sweet Rainbow! pride of summer days,
  High set at Heaven's command,
Though into drear and husky haze
  Thou melt on either hand;—

Dear tokens of a pardoning God,
  We hail ye, one and all,
As when our fathers walked abroad,
  Freed from their twelvemonth's thrall.

How joyful from th' imprisoning ark
  On the green earth they spring!
Not blither, after showers, the Lark
  Mounts up with glistening wing.

So home-bound sailors spring to shore,
  Two oceans safely past;
So happy souls, when life is o'er,
  Plunge in th' empyreal vast.

What wins their first and fondest gaze
  In all the blissful field,
And keeps it through a thousand days?
  Love face to face revealed:

Love imaged in that cordial look
  Our Lord in Eden bends
On souls that sin and earth forsook
  In time to die His friends.

And what most welcome and serene
  Dawns on the Patriarch's eye,
In all th' emerging hills so green,
  In all the brightening sky?

What, but the gentle rainbow's gleam,
  Soothing the wearied sight,
That cannot bear the solar beam,
  With soft undazzling light?

Lord, if our fathers turned to Thee
  With such adoring gaze,
Wondering frail man Thy light should see
  Without Thy scorching blaze;

Where is our love, and where our hearts,
  We who have seen Thy Son,
Have tried Thy Spirit's winning arts,
  And yet we are not won?

The Son of God in radiance beamed
  Too bright for us to scan,
But we may face the rays that streamed
  From the mild Son of man.

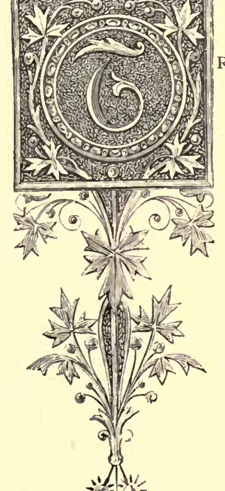
There, parted into rainbow hues,
  In sweet harmonious strife,
We see celestial Love diffuse
  Its light o'er Jesus' life.

God, by His bow, vouchsafes to write
  This truth in Heaven above;
As every lovely hue is Light,
  So every grace is Love.

Keble.



The Rainbow.



TRIUMPHAL arch, that fill'st the sky
  When storms prepare to part,
I ask not proud Philosophy
  To teach me what thou art;

Still seem, as to my childhood's sight,
  A midway station given
For happy spirits to alight
  Betwixt the earth and heaven.

Can all that Optics teach unfold
  Thy form to please me so,
As when I dreamt of gems and gold
  Hid in thy radiant bow?

When Science from Creation's face
  Enchantment's veil withdraws,
What lovely visions yield their place
  To cold material laws!

And yet, fair bow, no fabling dreams,
  But words of the Most High,
Have told why first thy robe of beams
  Was woven in the sky.

When o'er the green undeluged earth
  Heaven's covenant thou didst shine,
How came the world's grey fathers forth
  To watch thy sacred sign!

And when its yellow lustre smiled
  O'er mountains yet untrod,
Each mother held aloft her child
  To bless the bow of God.

Methinks thy jubilee to keep,
  The first-made anthem rang
On earth, delivered from the deep,
  And the first poet sang.

Nor ever shall the Muse's eye
  Unraptured greet thy beam:
Theme of primeval prophecy,
  Be still the poet's theme!

How glorious is thy girdle cast
  O'er mountain, tower, and town,
Or mirrored in the ocean vast,
  A thousand fathoms down!

As fresh in yon horizon dark,
  As young thy beauties seem
As when the eagle from the ark
  First sported in thy beam.

For, faithful to its sacred page,
  Heaven still rebuilds thy span,
Nor lets the type grow pale with age
  That first spoke peace to man.[1]

Campbell.

[1] Compare with Campbell's poem the lyric on the same subject by Henry Vaughan, in his *Silex Scintillans* (1648), in which many of the finest thoughts and phrases of the later poet are anticipated.



NOAH'S SACRIFICE.

When eyes that watched the Flood rise and decline
First saw the bow of beauteous colour braided
Which spanned a threatening cloud, then slowly faded,
Each heart relied on that assuring Sign.

The Rainbow a Type of Christ.

"And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth."—GEN. ix. 12, 13.

"And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."—REV. iv. 3.

WHEN eyes that watched the Flood rise and decline
First saw the bow of beauteous colour braided
Which spanned a threatening cloud, then slowly faded,
Each heart relied on that assuring Sign.
So when in Christ the dazzling Light Divine
Spreads out its heavenly splendours softly shaded
In clouds of flesh, our trembling faith is aided
On God's sure truth and mercy to recline.
To see Him once to holy John was given,
"Clothed in a cloud, a rainbow round His head,"
Earth's green memorial wearing still in heaven;
And when God looks upon that blessed token
Encircling "Him who liveth, and was dead,"
He keeps His covenant of peace unbroken.

Rev. R. Wilton

The Conversion of Abraham.

FOND heart, when learnest thou to say,
I love not pomps that fade away,
Nor glories that decay and wane,
Nor lights that rise to set again?
When wilt thou turn where Abraham turned,
And learn the lesson Abraham learned?
Beyond the river while he dwelt,
He with his kin to idols knelt,[1]
And nightly gazing on the sky,
Worshipped the starry host on high.
But when he saw their splendours fail,
And that bright multitude grow pale,
He left them, and adored the moon;
But she too wanly wanèd soon.
Baffled, he knelt unto the sun;
But when *his* race of light was done,
He cried, "To such no vows I bring—
I worship not the perishing!"
And turned him to the God whose hand
Made sun, and moon, and starry band—
An everlasting Light, in whom
Decrease and shadow find no room.

Archbishop Trench.

1 According to a Jewish tradition recorded by Josephus and in the Talmud. The same tradition prevails amongst the Mohammedans.

Hagar in the Desert.

INJURED, hopeless, faint and weary,
  Sad, indignant, and forlorn;
Through the desert, wild and dreary,
  Hagar leads the child of scorn.

Who can speak a mother's anguish,
  Painted in that tearless eye,
Which beholds her darling languish,
  Languish unrelieved, and die?

Lo! the empty pitcher fails her,
  Perishing with thirst, he dies;
Death with deep despair assails her,
  Piteous, as for aid he cries!

From the dreadful image flying,
  Wild, she rushes from the sight;
In the agonies of dying,
  Can she see her soul's delight?

Now bereft of every hope,
  Cast upon the burning ground;
Poor abandoned soul! look up,—
  Mercy hath thy sorrows found.

Lo! the Angel of the Lord
  Comes thy great distress to cheer;
Listen to the gracious word;
  See, Divine relief is near!

Care of Heaven ! though man forsake thee,
Wherefore vainly dost thou mourn ?
From thy dream of woe awake thee,
To thy rescued child return.

Lift thine eyes, behold yon fountain
Sparkling 'mid those fruitful trees ;
Lo ! beneath yon sheltering mountain
Smile for thee green bowers of ease.

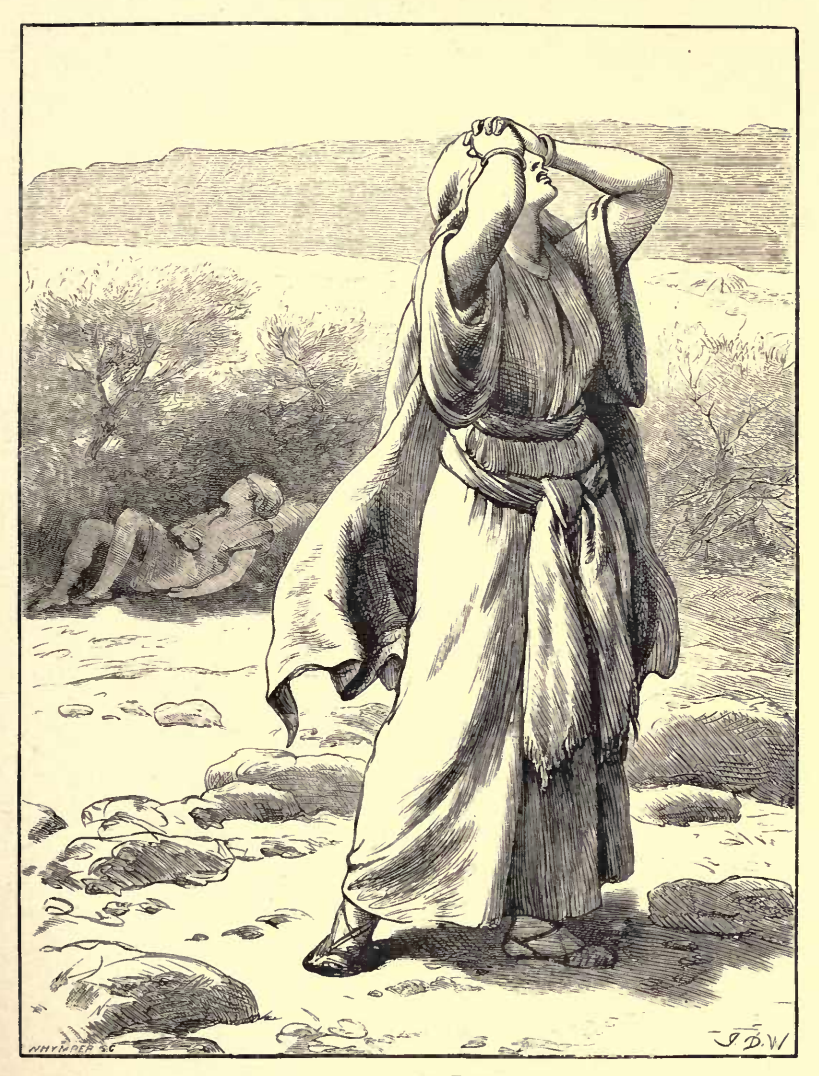
In the hour of sore affliction
God hath seen and pitied thee ;
Cheer thee in the sweet conviction,
Thou henceforth His care shalt be.

Be no more by doubts distressed,
Mother of a mighty race !
By contempt no more oppressed,
Thou hast found a resting-place.

Thus from peace and comfort driven,
Thou, poor soul, all desolate,
Hopeless lay, till pitying Heaven
Found thee in thy abject state.

O'er thy empty pitcher mourning,
'Mid the desert of the world,
Thus with shame and anguish burning,
From thy cherished comforts hurled :

See thy great Deliverer nigh,
Calls thee from thy sorrow vain ;
Bids thee on His love rely,
Bless the salutary pain.



HAGAR IN THE DESERT.

"WHO can speak a mother's anguish,
Painted in that tearless eye,
Which beholds her darling languish,
Languish unrelieved, and die.

From thine eyes the mists dispelling,
  Lo, the well of life He shows!
In His presence ever dwelling,
  Bids thee find thy true repose.

Future prospects rich in blessing,
  Open to thy hopes secure,
Sure of endless joys possessing,
  Of a heavenly kingdom sure.

Mrs. Tighe.

Hagar's Lament.

"GOD stay thee in thine agony, my boy!
  I cannot see thee die; I cannot brook
    Upon thy brow to look,
And see death settle on my cradle joy.
How have I drunk the light of thy blue eye!
    And could I see thee die?

"I did not dream of this when thou wast straying,
  Like an unbound gazelle, among the flowers;
    Or wiling the soft hours,
By the rich gush of water-sources playing,
Then sinking weary to thy smiling sleep,
  So beautiful and deep.

"Oh no! and when I watched by thee the while,
And saw thy bright lip curling in thy dream,
And thought of the dark stream
In my own land of Egypt, the far Nile,
How prayed I that my father's land might be
A heritage for thee!

"And now the grave for its cold breast hath won thee!
And thy white, delicate limbs the earth will press;
And oh! my last caress
Must feel thee cold, for a chill hand is on thee.
How can I leave my boy, so pillowed there
Upon his clustering hair?"

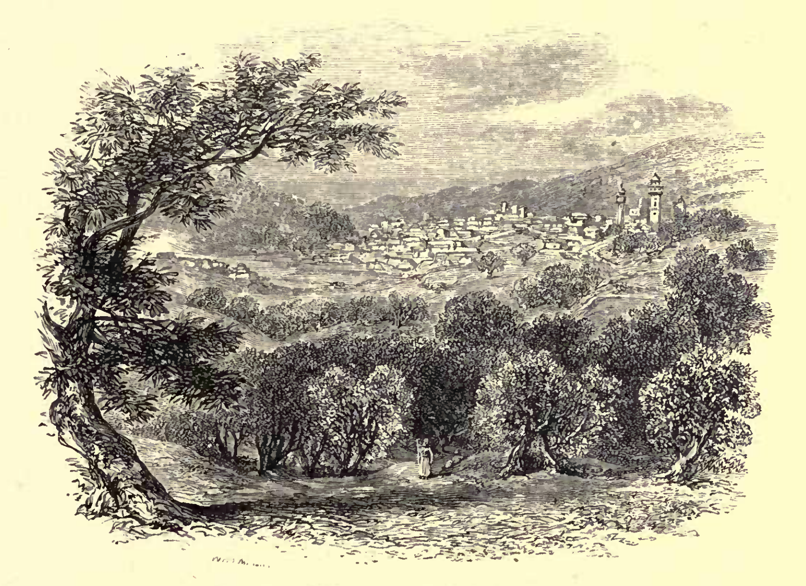
N. P. Willis.

The Cave of Machpelah.

CALM is it in the dim cathedral cloister,
Where lie the dead all couched in marble rare,
Where the shades thicken, and the breath hangs moister
Than in the sunlit air.

Where the chance ray that makes the carved stone whiter,
Tints with a crimson or a violet light
Some pale old bishop with his staff and mitre,
Some stiff crusading knight!

Sweet is it where the little graves fling shadows
  In the green churchyard, on the shaven grass,
And a faint cowslip fragrance from the meadows
  O'er the low wall doth pass!



Mosque over the Cave of Machpelah, at Hebron.

More sweet—more calm in that fair valley's bosom
  The burial-place in Ephron's pasture-ground,
Where the oil-olive shed her snowy blossom,
  And the red grape was found.

When the great pastoral prince with love undying
  Rose up in anguish from the face of death,
And weighed the silver shekels for its buying
  Before the sons of Heth.

Here, when the measure of his days was numbered—
  Days few and evil in this vale of tears!—
At Sarah's side the faithful patriarch slumbered,
  An old man full of years:

Here, holy Isaac, meek of heart and gentle,
  And the fair maid who came to him from far,
And the sad sire who knew all throes parental,
  And meek-eyed Leah, are;

She rests not here, the beautiful of feature,
  For whom her Jacob wrought his years twice o'er,
And deemed them but as one, for that fair creature,
  So dear the love he bore!

Nor Israel's son beloved,[1] who brought him sleeping
  With a long pomp of woe to Canaan's shade,
Till all the people wondered at the weeping
  By the Egyptians made.

Like roses from the same tree gathered yearly,
  And flung together in one vase to keep,—
Some, but not all who loved so well, and dearly,
  Lie here in quiet sleep.

What though the Moslem mosque be in the valley,
  Though faithless hands have sealed the sacred cave,
And the red Prophet's children shout "El Allah!"
  Over the Hebrews' grave;

Yet a day cometh when those white walls shaking
  Shall give again to light the living dead,
And Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, reawaking,
  Spring from their rocky bed.

Mrs. C. F. Alexander.

[1] "And the bones of Joseph buried they in Shechem."—Josh. xxiv. 32.

Lot in Zoar.

"NGEL of wrath! why linger in mid-air,
While the devoted city's cry
Louder and louder swells? and canst thou spare,
Thy full-charged vial standing by?"
Thus, with stern voice, unsparing Justice pleads:
He hears her not—with softened gaze
His eye is following where sweet Mercy leads,
And till she give the sign, his fury stays.

Guided by her, along the mountain road,
Far through the twilight of the morn,
With hurrying footsteps from th' accurs'd abode
He sees the holy household borne:
Angel, or more, on either hand are nigh,
To speed them o'er the tempting plain,
Lingering in heart, and with frail sidelong eye
Seeking how near they may unharmed remain.

Ah! wherefore gleam those upland slopes so fair?
And why, through every woodland arch,
Swells yon bright vale, as Eden rich and rare,
Where Jordan winds his stately march?
"If all must be forsaken, ruined all,
If God have planted but to burn—
Surely not yet th' avenging shower will fall,
Though to my home for one last look I turn."

Thus while they waver, surely long ago
They had provoked the withering blast,
But that the merciful Avengers know
Their frailty well, and hold them fast.

"Haste, for thy life escape, nor look behind"—
Ever in thrilling sounds like these
They check the wandering eye, severely kind,
Nor let the sinner loose his soul at ease.

And when, o'er-wearied with the steep ascent,
We for a nearer refuge crave,
One little spot of ground in mercy lent,
One hour of home before the grave,
Oft in His pity o'er His children weak,
His hand withdraws the penal fire,
And where we fondly cling, forbears to wreak
Full vengeance, till our hearts are weaned entire.

Thus by the merits of one righteous man,
The Church, our Zoar, shall abide,
Till she abuse, so sore, her lengthened span,
Even if Mercy's self her face must hide.
Then onward yet a step, thou hard-won soul;
Though in the Church thou know thy place,
The Mountain farther lies—there seek thy goal,
There breathe at large, o'erpast thy dangerous race.

Sweet is the smile of home; the mutual look
When hearts are of each other sure;
Sweet all the joys that crowd the household nook,
The haunt of all affections pure;
Yet in the world ev'n these abide, and we
Above the world our calling boast;
Once gain the mountain top, and thou art free:
Till then, who rest, presume; who turn to look, are lost.

Keble.

The Dead Sea.

THE wind blows chill across those gloomy waves;—
Oh! how unlike the green and dancing main!
The surge is foul as if it rolled o'er graves;—
Stranger, here lie the cities of the plain.
Yes, on that plain, by wild waves covered now,
Rose palace once, and sparkling pinnacle;
On pomp and spectacle beamed morning's glow,
On pomp and festival the twilight fell.
Lovely and splendid all,—but Sodom's soul
Was stained with blood, and pride, and perjury;
Long warned, long spared, till her whole heart was foul,
And fiery vengeance on its clouds came nigh.
And still she mocked, and danced, and taunting spoke
Her sportive blasphemies against the Throne:—
It came! the thunder on her slumber broke;
God spake the word of wrath! her dream was done.
Yet, in her final night, amid her stood
Immortal messenger, and pausing Heaven
Pleaded with man, but she was quite imbued,
Her last hour waned, she scorned to be forgiven!
'Twas done!—down poured at once the sulphurous shower,
Down stooped in flame the heaven's red canopy.
Oh for the arm of God in that fierce hour!—
'Twas vain, nor help of God or man was nigh.
They rush, they bound, they howl, the men of sin;
Still stooped the cloud, still burst the thicker blaze;
The earthquake heaved!—then sank the hideous din!—
Yon wave of darkness o'er their ashes strays.

Croly.

Isaac Meditating.

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."—GEN. xxiv. 63—67.

IN the lone field he walks at eventide,
To meditate beneath the open sky,
Where borne on lighter wings prayers upward fly,
And down from Heaven sweet answers swiftly glide.
But as he glanced around that landscape wide,
Far off a train of camels meets his eye,
And as they nearer come he can descry
A maiden veiled—his unseen, God-sent bride.
Thus while to Heaven thought after thought was rising,
The fair Rebekah step by step drew nigh,
With life's chief joy the prayerful saint surprising:
For those who think of Him God still is thinking,
With tender condescension from on high,
Some comfort ever to some duty linking.

Rev. R. Wilton.





Rachel's Tomb, near Bethlehem.

Death of Rachel.

AND Rachel lies in Ephrath's land,
Beneath her lonely oak of weeping;
With mouldering heart, and withering hand,
The sleep of death for ever sleeping.

The Spring comes smiling down the vale,
The lilies and the roses bringing;
But Rachel never more shall hail
The flowers that in the world are springing.

The Summer gives his radiant day,
  And Jewish dames the dance are treading;
But Rachel, on her couch of clay,
  Sleeps all unheeded and unheeding.

The Autumn's ripening sunbeam shines,
  And reapers to the field are calling;
But Rachel's voice no longer joins
  The choral song at twilight's falling.

The Winter sends his drenching shower,
  And sweeps his howling blast around her;
But earthly storms possess no power
  To break the slumber that hath bound her.

Thus round and round the Seasons go,
  But joy or grief no more betide her;
For Rachel's bosom could not know,
  Though friends were housed in death beside her.

Yet Time shall come, as prophets say,
  Whose dreams with glorious things are blended,
When Seasons, on their changeful way,
  Shall wend not as they long have wended.

Yes, Time shall come, when flowers that bloom
  Shall meet no storm their bloom to wither;
When friends, rejoicing from the tomb,
  Have gone to heavenly climes together.

Knox.



Jacob's Dream.

THE sun was sinking on the mountain zone
That guards thy vales of beauty, Palestine!
And lovely from the desert rose the moon,
Yet lingering on the horizon's purple line,
Like a pure spirit o'er its earthly shrine.
Up Bethel's rocky height abrupt and bare
A pilgrim toiled, and oft on day's decline
Looked pale, then paused for eve's delicious air;
The summit gained, he knelt, and breathed his evening prayer.

He spread his cloak, and slumbered; darkness fell
Upon the twilight hills; a sudden sound
Of silver trumpets o'er him seemed to swell,
Clouds heavy with the tempest gathered round;
Yet was the whirlwind in its cavern bound;
Still deeper rolled the darkness from on high,
Gigantic volume upon volume wound;—
Above, a pillar shooting to the sky;
Below, a mighty sea that spread incessantly.

Voices are heard, a choir of golden strings,
Low winds, whose breath is loaded with the rose:
Then chariot-wheels, the nearer rush of wings;
Pale lightning round the dark pavilion glows.
It thunders; the resplendent gates unclose;
Far as the eye can glance, on height o'er height
Rise fiery waving wings, and star-crowned brows,
Millions on millions, brighter and more bright,
Till all is lost in one supreme unmingled light.

Croly.

Esau.

"AND is there in God's world so drear a place
Where the loud bitter cry is raised in vain?
Where tears of penance come too late for grace,
As on th' uprooted flower the genial rain?"

'Tis even so: the sovereign Lord of souls
Stores in the dungeon of His boundless realm
Each bolt that o'er the sinner vainly rolls,
With gathered wrath the reprobate to whelm.

Will the storm hear the sailor's piteous cry,
Taught to mistrust, too late, the tempting wave,
When all around he sees but sea and sky,
A God in anger, a self-chosen grave?

Or will the thorns, that strew intemperance' bed,
Turn with a wish to down? will late remorse
Recall the shaft the murderer's hand has sped,
Or from the guiltless bosom turn its course?

Then may th' unbodied soul in safety fleet
Through the dark curtains of the world above,
Fresh from the stain of crime; nor fear to meet
The God whom here she would not learn to love:

Then is there hope for such as die unblest,
That angel wings may waft them to the shore,
Nor need th' unready virgin strike her breast,
Nor wait desponding round the bridegroom's door.

But where is then the stay of contrite hearts?
Of old they leaned on Thy eternal word,

But with the sinner's fear their hope departs,
  Fast linked as thy great Name to Thee, O Lord:
That Name, by which Thy faithful oath is past,
  That we should endless be, for joy or woe:
And if the treasures of Thy wrath could waste,
  Thy lovers must their promised heaven forego.

But ask of elder days, earth's vernal hour,
  When in familiar talk God's voice was heard,
When at the patriarch's call the fiery shower
  Propitious o'er the turf-built shrine appeared.

Watch by our father Isaac's pastoral door—
  The birthright sold, the blessing lost and won,
Tell, Heaven has wrath that can relent no more,
  The grave, dark deeds that cannot be undone.

We barter life for pottage; sell true bliss
  For wealth or power, for pleasure or renown;
Thus, Esau-like, our Father's blessing miss,
  Then wash with fruitless tears our faded crown.

Our faded crown, despised and flung aside,
  Shall on some brother's brow immortal bloom,
No partial hand the blessing may misguide;
  No flattering fancy change our Monarch's doom:

His righteous doom, that meek true-hearted love
  The everlasting birthright should receive,
The softest dews drop on her from above,
  The richest green her mountain garland weave.

Her brethren, mightiest, wisest, eldest born,
  Bow to her sway, and move at her behest:
Isaac's fond blessing may not fall on scorn,
  Nor Balaam's curse on love, which God hath blest.

Keble.

Jacob Wrestling.

Come, O Thou Traveller unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see,
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with Thee;
With Thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

I need not tell Thee who I am,
My misery or sin declare;
Thyself hast called me by my name;
Look on Thy hands, and read it there!
But who, I ask Thee, who art Thou?
Tell me Thy name, and tell me now.

In vain Thou strugglest to get free,
I never will unloose my hold;
Art Thou the Man that died for me?
The secret of Thy love unfold.
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know.

Wilt Thou not yet to me reveal
Thy new, unutterable name?
Tell me, I still beseech Thee, tell;
To know it now resolved I am:
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know.

'Tis all in vain to hold Thy tongue,
  Or touch the hollow of my thigh ;
Though every sinew be unstrung,
  Out of my arms Thou shalt not fly :
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know.

What though my shrinking flesh complain,
  And murmur to contend so long ?
I rise superior to my pain ;
  When I am weak, then I am strong :
And when my all of strength shall fail,
I shall with the God-Man prevail.

My strength is gone ; my nature dies ;
  I sink beneath Thy weighty hand,
Faint to revive, and fall to rise ;
  I fall, and yet by faith I stand :
I stand, and will not let Thee go
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know.

Yield to me now, for I am weak,
  But confident in self-despair ;
Speak to my heart, in blessings speak,
  Be conquered by my instant prayer !
Speak, or Thou never hence shalt move,
And tell me if Thy name is Love ?

'Tis Love ! 'tis Love ! Thou diedst for me !
  I hear Thy whisper in my heart !
The morning breaks, the shadows flee ;
  Pure universal Love Thou art !
To me, to all, Thy bowels move ;
Thy nature and Thy name is Love !

My prayer hath power with God; the grace
  Unspeakable I now receive;
Through faith I see Thee face to face,
  I see Thee face to face and live:
In vain I have not wept and strove;
Thy nature and Thy name is Love!

I know Thee, Saviour, who Thou art;
  Jesus, the feeble sinner's Friend!
Nor wilt Thou with the night depart,
  But stay and love me to the end!
Thy mercies never shall remove,
Thy nature and Thy name is Love!

The Sun of Righteousness on me
  Hath rose, with healing in His wings;
Withered my nature's strength, from Thee
  My soul its life and succour brings:
My help is all laid up above;
Thy nature and Thy name is Love.

Contented now upon my thigh
  I halt, till life's short journey end;
All helplessness, all weakness, I
  On Thee alone for strength depend;
Nor have I power from Thee to move;
Thy nature and Thy name is Love.

Lame as I am, I take the prey,
  Hell, earth, and sin, with ease o'ercome;
I leap for joy, pursue my way,
  And as a bounding hart fly home!
Through all eternity to prove
Thy nature and Thy name is Love!

Charles Wesley.



Joseph's History.

HEAVEN'S favourite down a darksome pit they cast,
His rich-hued robe and lofty dreams deriding;
Then, from his tears their ruthless faces hiding,
Sell him to merchants who with spicery past.
The changeful years o'er that fair slave fled fast:
Behold him now in glorious chariot riding,
Arrayed in shining vesture, and presiding
O'er Egypt's councils,—owned by Heaven at last.

In pit or palace, God's own hand was weaving
The "many-coloured" texture of his days,
The brightest tints till last in wisdom leaving.
So when in dismal paths our feet are sinking,
Let us be looking soon for lightsome rays,
For our wise Father "thoughts of peace is thinking."

Rev. R. Wilton.

Jacob and Pharaoh.

PHARAOH upon a gorgeous throne of state
Was seated; while around him stood submiss
His servants, watchful of his lofty looks.
The patriarch enters, leaning on the arm
Of Benjamin. Unmoved by all the glare
Of royalty, he scarcely throws a glance
Upon the pageant show; for from his youth
A shepherd's life he led, and viewed each night
The starry host; and still, where'er he went,
He felt himself in presence of the Lord.
His eye is bent on Joseph,—him pursues.
Sudden the king descends; and, bending, kneels
Before the aged man, and supplicates
A blessing from his lips: the aged man
Lays on the ground his staff, and stretching forth
His tremulous hand o'er Pharaoh's uncrowned head,
Prays that the Lord would bless him and his land.

Grahame.



The Finding of Moses.

Slow glides the Nile: amid the margin flags,
Closed in a bulrush ark, the babe is left,—
Left by a mother's hand. His sister waits
Far off; and pale, 'tween hope and fear, beholds
The royal maid, surrounded by her train,

Approach the river bank,—approach the spot
Where sleeps the innocent. She sees them stoop
With meeting plumes; the rushy lid is oped,
And wakes the infant, smiling in his tears:
As when along a little mountain lake
The Summer south wind breathes with gentle sigh,
And parts the reeds, unveiling, as they bend,
A water-lily floating on the wave.

Grahame.

The Middle Life of Moses.

ERE Moses could the prison-doors unlock
Where Israel long in iron bondage lay,
On the green slopes beneath old Horeb grey
A lonely shepherd he must feed his flock;
There sitting in the shade of some great rock
Mark the swift eagle darting on its prey,
Or watch the forked lightnings fiercely play,
And listen to the awful thunder-shock.
Thus 'mid the peaceful scenes of pastoral life,
Or sterner sights of mountain solitude,
He spent long years in holy contemplation;
To brace his spirit for that arduous strife
With Israel's foes, and provocations rude,
Of God's own ransomed but rebellious nation.

Rev. R. Wilton.

Moses in the Desert.

Go where a foot hath never trod,
  Through unfrequented forests flee ;
The wilderness is full of God,
  His presence dwells in every tree.

To Israel and to Egypt dead,
  Moses the fugitive appears ;
Unknown he lived, till o'er his head
  Had fall'n the snow of fourscore years.

But God the wandering exile found
  In His appointed time and place ;
The desert sand grew holy ground,
  And Horeb's rock a throne of grace.

The lowly bush a tree became,
  A tree of beauty and of light,
Involved with unconsuming flame,
  That made the moon around it night.

Thence came the Eternal voice that spake
  Salvation to the chosen seed ;
Thence went the Almighty arm that brake
  Proud Pharaoh's yoke, and Israel freed.

By Moses, old and slow of speech,
  These mighty miracles were shown,
Jehovah's messenger !—to teach
  That power belongs to God alone.

James Montgomery.



The Death of the Firstborn.

When life is forgot, and night hath power,
And mortals feel no dread;
When silence and slumber rule the hour,
And dreams are round the head;
God shall smite the firstborn of Egypt's race,
The destroyer shall enter each dwelling-place—
Shall enter and choose his dead.

"To your homes," said the leader of Israel's host,
"And slaughter a sacrifice:
Let the life-blood be sprinkled on each door-post,
Nor stir till the morn arise;
And the Angel of Vengeance shall pass you by,
He shall see the red stain, and shall not come nigh
Where the hope of your household lies."

The people hear, and they bow them low—
Each to his house hath flown;
The lamb is slain, and with blood they go
And sprinkle the lintel-stone;
And the doors they close when the sun hath set,
But few in oblivious sleep forget
The judgment to be done.

'Tis midnight—yet they hear no sound
Along the lone, still street;
No blast of a pestilence sweeps the ground,
No tramp of unearthly feet,
Nor rush as of harpy wing goes by,
But the calm moon floats in the cloudless sky,
'Mid her wan light clear and sweet.

Once only, shot like an arrowy ray,
A pale blue flash was seen,
It passed so swift, the eye scarce could say
That such a thing had been:
Yet the beat of every heart was still,
And the flesh crawled fearfully and chill,
And back flowed every vein.

The courage of Israel's bravest quailed
At the view of that awful light,
Though the blood of their offering availed
To shield them from its might;

They felt 'twas the Spirit of Death had past,
That the brightness they saw, his cold glance had cast
On Egypt's land that night:—

That his fearful eye had unwarned struck down
In the darkness of the grave
The hope of that empire, the praise of its crown,
The firstborn of lord and slave:—
The lovely, the tender, the ardent, the gay,
Where were they?—all withered in ashes away
At the terrible death-glare it gave.

From the couches of slumber ten thousand cries
Burst forth 'mid the silence dread—
The youth by his living brother lies
Sightless, and dumb, and dead!
The infant lies cold at his mother's breast,
She had kissed him alive as she sunk to rest,
She awakens—his life hath fled!

And shrieks from the palace chambers break—
Their inmates are steeped in woe,
And Pharaoh hath found his proud arm too weak
To arrest the mighty blow:
Wail, King of the Pyramids! Egypt's throne
Cannot lighten thy heart of a single groan
For thy kingdom's heir laid low.

Wail, King of the Pyramids! Death hath cast
His shafts through thine empire wide,
But o'er Israel in bondage his rage hath past,
No firstborn of hers hath died—
Go, satrap! command that the captive be free,
Lest their God in fierce anger should smite even thee
On the crown of thy purple pride.

Anon.

The Burning Bush.

Th' historic muse, from age to age
Through many a waste heart-sickening page
  Hath traced the works of man:
But a celestial call to-day
Stays her, like Moses, on her way,
  The works of God to scan.

Far seen across the sandy wild,
Where, like a solitary child,
  He thoughtless roamed and free,
One towering thorn[1] was wrapt in flame—
Bright without blaze it went and came:
  Who would not turn and see?

Along the mountain ledges green
The scattered sheep at will may glean
  The desert's spicy stores;
The while, with undivided heart,
The shepherd talks with God apart,
  And, as he talks, adores.

Ye too, who tend Christ's wildering flock,
Well may ye gather round the rock
  That once was Sion's hill,
To watch the fire upon the mount
Still blazing, like the solar fount,
  Yet unconsuming still.

1 "Seneh," said to be a sort of acacia.

Caught from that blaze by wrath divine,
Lost branches of the once-loved vine,
  Now withered, spent, and sere,
See Israel's sons, like glowing brands,
Tossed wildly o'er a thousand lands
  For twice a thousand year.

God will not quench nor slay them quite,
But lifts them like a beacon light
  Th' apostate church to scare;
Or like pale ghosts that darkling roam,
Hovering around their ancient home,
  But find no refuge there.

Ye blessed angels, if of you
There be who love the ways to view
  Of kings and kingdoms here—
(And sure 'tis worth an angel's gaze
To see throughout that dreary maze,
  God teaching love and fear)—

Oh say, in all the bleak expanse,
Is there a spot to win your glance,
  So bright, so dark, as this?
A hopeless faith, a homeless race,
Yet seeking the most holy place,
  And owning the true bliss!

Salted with fire they, seem[1] to show
How spirits lost in endless woe
  May undecaying live.
Oh, sickening thought! yet hold it fast
Long as this glittering world shall last,
  Or sin at heart survive.

[1] Mark ix. 49.

And hark! amid the flashing fire,
Mingled with tones of fear and ire,
  Soft Mercy's undersong—
'Tis Abraham's God who speaks so loud,
His people's cries have pierced the cloud,
  He sees, He sees their wrong.[1]

He is come down to break their chain;
Though never more on Sion's fane
  His visible ensign wave;
'Tis Sion, wheresoe'er they dwell,
Who, with His own true Israel,
  Shall own Him strong to save.

He shall redeem them one by one,
Where'er the world-encircling sun
  Shall see them meekly kneel:
All that He asks on Israel's part
Is only that the captive heart
  Its woe and burthen feel.

Gentiles! with fixed yet awful eye
Turn ye this page of mystery,
  Nor slight the warning sound:
"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet—
The place where man his God shall meet,
  Be sure, is holy ground."

Keble.

EXOD. iii. 7–10.

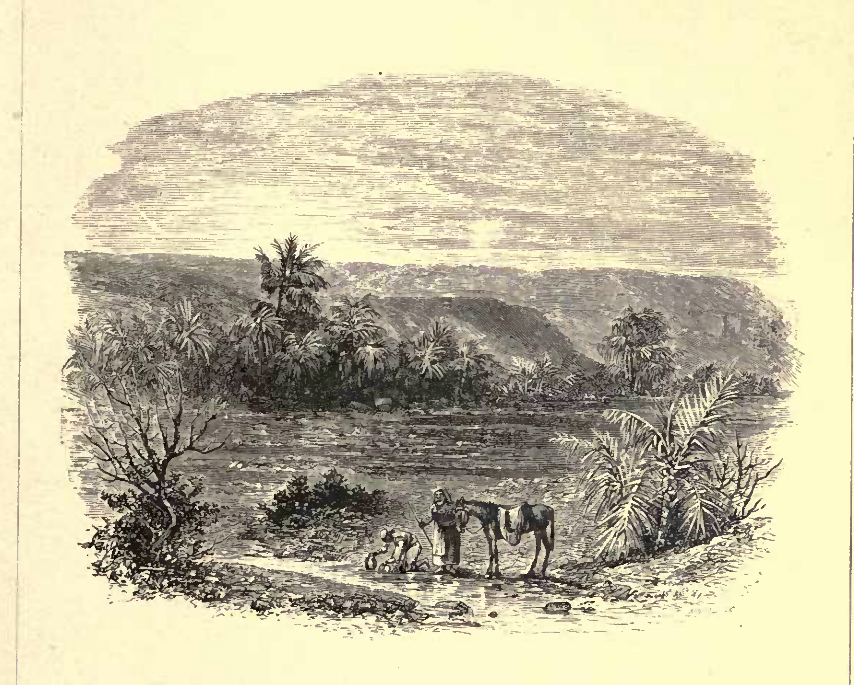
Miriam's Song.

'And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea."—EXOD. xv. 20, 21.

SOUND the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed! His people are free!
Sing—for the pride of the tyrant is broken;
His chariots, his horsemen, all splendid and brave,
How vain was their boasting! the Lord hath but spoken,
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed! His people are free!

Praise to the Conqueror, praise to the Lord,
His word was our arrow, His breath was our sword
Who shall return to tell Egypt the story
Of those she sent forth in the hour of her pride?
For the Lord hath looked out from His pillar of glory,
And all her brave thousands are dashed in the tide.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed! His people are free!

Moore.



The Palms of Elim.

At Elim with its whispering grove of palm,
And clustered wells in cool abundance springing,
Israel encamped—their sighs exchanged for singing,
And Marah's murmurs for a gladsome psalm.
Earth has its Elims still of shadowy calm—
Sweet homes, with gentle vines about them clinging,
And olive branches green—young voices ringing,
And tried affection breathing grateful balm.

Lord, if such love makes glad, such beauty graces,
The desert tracts Thy people tread below—
Such wells of comfort cheer earth's resting-places,
Such pleasant shades relieve the way we go,—
That heavenly land itself, how passing fair!
How passing sweet the home that waits us there!

Rev. R. Wilton.

The Fountain of Marah.



HERE is the tree the prophet threw
Into the bitter wave?
Left it no scion where it grew,
The thirsting soul to save?

Hath nature lost the hidden power
Its precious foliage shed?
Is there no distant eastern bower
With such sweet leaves o'erspread?

Nay, wherefore ask? since gifts are ours
Which yet may well imbue
Earth's many troubled founts with showers
Of heaven's own balmy dew.

Oh! mingled with the cup of grief
Let faith's deep spirit be,
And every prayer shall win a leaf
From that blest healing tree!

Mrs. Hemans.

Moses descending from Sinai.

Prophet of God, descending from the mount!
Thy feet have trodden holy ground, thine eye
Hath caught from opening heaven its radiancy,
And brought it hither from its highest fount!
So have I sometimes seen a Christian bear
A brightness, not of earth, but from above,
Lighting his countenance with rays of love
As he descended from the mount of prayer:
Benevolence, affection, holy peace,
Serene and humble trust,—a soul at rest,
A faith established, and a peaceful breast,
A confidence, a joy, which cannot cease:
These, these have shed a glory pure and bright
As that which clad the prophet's face with light!

Edmeston.



Sinai and Calvary.



THE Lord of Might, from Sinai's brow,
Gave forth His voice of thunder!
And Israel lay on earth below,
Outstretched in fear and wonder.
Beneath His feet was pitchy night,
And at His left hand and His right
The rocks were rent asunder!

The Lord of Love, on Calvary,
A meek and suffering Stranger,
Upraised to heaven His languid eye
In nature's hour of danger.
For us He bore the weight of woe,
For us He gave His blood to flow,
And met His Father's anger.

The Lord of Love, the Lord of Might,
The King of all created,
Shall back return to claim His right,
On clouds of glory seated;
With trumpet-sound and angel-song,
And hallelujahs loud and long
O'er death and hell defeated!

Heber.



SINAI.

"And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled."—*Exod.* xix. 16.



The Waters of Life.

"And from thence they went to Beer: that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it; the princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves."—NUMB. xxi. 16—18.

SPRING up, O well! sweet fountain! spring,
And fructify the desert sand;
Sing, ye that drink; the waters sing,
They dance along the smiling land;
With flowers adorn, with verdure dress
The waste and howling wilderness.

Ho! every one that thirsts, draw nigh,
  Fainting with sickness, worn with toil;
Let him that hath no money buy,
  Buy milk and honey, wine and oil,—
Those fourfold streams of paradise,
Priceless, because above all price!

Come to the pool, ye lame and blind!
  Ye lepers, to this Jordan come!
Sight, strength, and healing, each may find.
  Approach the waves, ye deaf and dumb,
Their joyful sound ye soon shall hear,
And your own voice salute your ear.

In every form the waters run,
  Rill, river, torrent, lake, and sea;
Through every clime beneath the sun,
  Free as the air, as daylight free.
Till earth's whole face the floods o'ersweep,
As ocean's tides the channelled deep.

As moved, with mighty wings outspread,
  God's Spirit o'er the formless void,
So be that Spirit's influence shed
  To new-create a world destroyed,
Till all that died through Adam's fall
Revive in Christ, who "died for all."

James Montgomery.



The March of Israel.

"And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."—EXOD. xl. 36–38

THEY trod in peace the Arab sand,
In martial pomp and show,
With banners spread, and swords in hand,
None dared to be a foe.
Though wandering o'er the world's wide face,
None dared molest the sacred race.

For o'er the ark still hovered nigh
The mystic guide and shield;
A cloud when day o'erspread the sky,
A flame when night concealed.
This pointed out their devious way,
Or told their armies when to stay.

But oh! how changed from those glad times!
That wonder how reversed!
They wander still o'er different climes,
But joyless and accursed;
Their remnant scattered far and wide,
Without a God, without a guide.

Henry Rogers.

Balak and Balaam.

NUMB. xxiii. 24.

UPON the hill the prophet stood;
King Balak in the rocky vale,
Around him, like a fiery flood,
Flashed to the sun his men of mail.

'Twas morn;—'twas noon;—the sacrifice
Still rolled its sheeted flame to heaven;
Still on the prophet turned their eyes,
Nor yet the fearful curse was given.

'Twas eve;—the flame was feeble now,
Dried was the victim's purple blood;
The sun was rushing broad and low
Upon the murmuring multitude.

"Now curse, or die!"—The gathering roar
Around him, like a tempest, came;
Again the altar streamed with gore,
And blushed again the sky with shame.

The prophet was in prayer;—he rose,
His mantle from his face he flung;
He listened, where the mighty foes
To heaven their evening anthem sung.

He saw their camp, like endless clouds;
  Mixed with th' horizon's distant blue;
Saw on the plain their marshalled crowds,
  Heard the high strain their trumpets blew.

A sudden spirit on him came,
  A sudden fire was in his eye;
His tongue was touched with hallowed flame,
  The "curser" swelled with prophecy.

"How shall I curse whom God hath blessed,
  With whom He dwells, with whom shall dwell?"
He clasped his pale hands on his breast,
  "Then be thou blest, O Israel!"

"Be Israel cursed," was in his soul,
  But on his lip the wild words died;
He paused, till on its myriads stole
  The night; again the "curse" he tried.

A whirlwind from the desert rushed,
  Deep thunder echoed round the hill;
King, prophet, multitude, were hushed;
  The thunder sank, the blast was still!

Broad in the east a new-born star
  On cloud, hill, desert, poured its blaze!
The prophet knew the sign afar,
  And on it fixed his shuddering gaze.

"I shall behold it, but not now!
  I shall behold HIM, but not nigh!
He comes to break th' oppressor's bow,
  To triumph, suffer, weep, and die!"

Anonymous.

The Death of Moses.

NUMB. xxvii. 12, 13.

HE climbed the mountain, and behold!
The land before him lay:
Here Jordan's boundary waters rolled,
There Carmel stretched away.

Where strangers' lives the patriarchs led,
Their promised Canaan smiled;
From northern Lebanon outspread,
To Araby the wild.

A land of fountains and of rills,
With milk and honey fraught,
Whose stones were iron, from whose hills
Marble and brass were wrought.

A land of corn, and wine, and oil,
Whose trees with fruitage hung;
While birds, to soothe the labourer's toil,
Among the branches sung.

Valleys stood thick with golden grain;
Goats bounded on the rocks;
And, white and dark, on slope and plain,
Roamed pasturing herds and flocks.

But all the soil with blood was stained;
  Revenge and rapine strove;
Pagan abominations reigned
  In every tainted grove.

From cities, populous and proud,
  The shrieks of infants came;
To drums and trumpets danced the crowd
  Round Moloch's altar-flame.

The vision changed; and Moses saw
  The idols overthrown;
God out of Zion giving law,
  God worshipped there alone.

And still the vision grew more bright;—
  O'er humble Bethlehem shined
The Star of Jacob, and a Light
  To lighten all mankind.

In silent trance the prophet gazed;
  "It is enough!" he cried;
His hands with holy transport raised,
  Saw the Lord's Christ, and died.

His soul returned to God, who gave;
  His body, nowhere found,
Shall keep the secret of its grave
  Till the last trumpet sound.

James Montgomery.

The Burial of Moses.

"And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor, but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."
DEUT. xxxiv. 6.



By Nebo's lonely mountain,
  On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
  There lies a lonely grave.
And no man knows that sepulchre,
  And no man saw it e'er,
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
  And laid the dead man there.

That was the grandest funeral
  That ever passed on earth;
But no man heard the trampling,
  Or saw the train go forth—
Noiselessly as the daylight
  Comes back when night is done,
And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
  Grows into the great sun;

Noiselessly as the spring-time
  Her crown of verdure weaves,
And all the trees on all the hills
  Open their thousand leaves;
So without sound of music,
  Or voice of them that wept,
Silently down from the mountain's crown
  The great procession swept.

Perchance the bald old eagle,
  On grey Beth-peor's height,
Out of his lonely eyrie
  Looked on the wondrous sight;
Perchance the lion stalking,
  Still shuns that hallowed spot,
For beast and bird have seen and heard
  That which man knoweth not.

But when the warrior dieth,
  His comrades in the war,
With arms reversed and muffled drum,
  Follow his funeral car;
They show the banners taken,
  They tell his battles won,
And after him lead his masterless steed
  While peals the minute gun.

Amid the noblest of the land
  We lay the sage to rest,
And give the bard an honoured place
  With costly marble drest,
In the great minster transept,
  Where lights like glories fall,
And the organ rings, and the sweet choir sings,
  Along the emblazoned wall.

This was the truest warrior
  That ever buckled sword;
This the most gifted poet
  That ever breathed a word.

And never earth's philosopher
  Traced with his golden pen
On the deathless page truths half so sage
  As he wrote down for men.

And had he not high honour?—
  The hill-side for a pall,
To lie in state, while angels wait,
  With stars for tapers tall;
And the dark rock-pines, like tossing plumes,
  Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand in that lonely land
  To lay him in the grave,—

In that strange grave without a name,
  Whence his uncoffined clay
Shall break again, O wondrous thought!
  Before the judgment day,
And stand with glory wrapt around
  On the hills he never trod;
And speak of the strife, that won our life,
  With the incarnate SON OF GOD.

O lonely grave in Moab's land!
  O dark Beth-peor's hill!
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
  And teach them to be still.
God hath His mysteries of grace,
  Ways that we cannot tell;
He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep
  Of him He loved so well.

Mrs. C. F. Alexanaer.

"No Man knoweth his Sepulchre."

WHEN he who, from the scourge of wrong,
Aroused the Hebrew tribes to fly,
Saw the fair region, promised long,
And bowed him on the hills to die;

God made his grave to man unknown,
Where Moab's rocks a vale enfold,
And laid the aged seer alone
To slumber while the world grows old.

Thus still, whene'er the good and just
Close the dim eye on life and pain,
Heaven watches o'er their sleeping dust
Till the pure spirit comes again.

Though nameless, trampled, and forgot,
His servant's humble ashes lie,
Yet God has marked and sealed the spot,
To call its inmate to the sky.

W. C. Bryant.

Joshua at Gibeon.

"Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel."—JOSH. x. 12—14.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive." — MATT. xxi. 21, 22.

SEE Israel's conquering captain spear in hand,
As on the surging battle's foremost crest
Against those mighty banded hosts he prest:
With sudden touch of inspiration grand,
He cried aloud, "O Sun, I bid thee stand
Still upon Gibeon, nor approach the west;
And thou, O Moon, in Ajalon's valley rest:"
And Sun and Moon stood still at his command.
The world before or since saw no such day,
When the Lord hearkened to that strange behest,
And deigned the rolling orbs of heaven to stay;
Yet when Christ's humblest soldier kneels to pray,
A power as wondrous clothes his meek request,
For His dear sake whom all the worlds obey.

Rev. R. Wilton.

Deborah's Song of Praise.

THEN SANG DEBORAH AND BARAK THE SON OF ABINOAM ON THAT DAY, SAYING,—

Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel,
When the people willingly offered themselves.
Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel.
Lord, when Thou wentest out of Seir,
When Thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.
The mountains melted from before the Lord,
Even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,—in the days of Jael,
The highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways.
The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel,
Until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.
They chose new gods; then was war in the gates:
Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?
My heart is toward the governors of Israel,
That offered themselves willingly among the people.
Bless ye the Lord. Speak, ye that ride on white asses,
Ye that sit in judgment,—and walk by the way.
They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water,
There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord,

Even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of His villages in Israel :
Then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates.

Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song:
Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.
Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people :
The Lord made me have dominion over the mighty.
Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek ;
After thee, Benjamin, among thy people ;
Out of Machir came down governors,
And out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.
And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah ; even Issachar, and also Barak :
He was sent on foot into the valley.
For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart.
Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks ?
For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.
Gilead abode beyond Jordan : and why did Dan remain in ships?
Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches.
Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death
In the high places of the field.

The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo ; they took no gain of money.
They fought from heaven ; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

Then were the horsehoofs broken
By the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.

Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord,
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;
Because they came not to the help of the Lord,
To the help of the Lord against the mighty.
Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be,
Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
He asked water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish.
She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head,
When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down:
At her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead.
The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice,
Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself,
Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey;
To every man a damsel or two;
To Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework,
Of divers colours of needlework on both sides,
Meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?

So let all Thine enemies perish, O Lord:
But let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.

Jephthah's Vow.

FROM conquest Jephthah came with faltering step
And troubled eye; his home appears in view;
He trembles at the sight. Sad he forebodes
His vow will meet a victim in his child:
For well he knows that, from her earliest years,
She still was first to meet his homeward steps:
Well he remembers how, with tottering gait,
She ran, and clasped his knees, and lisped, and
looked
Her joy; and how, when garlanding with flowers
His helm, fearful, her infant hand would shrink
Back from the lion couched beneath the crest.
What sound is that, which, from the palm-tree grove,
Floats now with choral swell, now fainter falls
Upon the ear? It is, it is the song
He loved to hear,—a song of thanks and praise,
Sung by the patriarch for his ransomed son.[1]
Hope from the omen springs: oh, blessed hope!
It may not be her voice!—Fain would he think
'Twas not his daughter's voice that still approached
Blent with the timbrel's note. Forth from the grove
She foremost glides of all the minstrel band:
Moveless he stands; then grasps his hilt, still red
With hostile gore, but shuddering, quits the hold;
And clasps in agony his hands, and cries,
"Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me low."—
The timbrel at her rooted feet resounds.

Grahame.



SAMSON'S RIDDLE.

Passing once more he sought the same green shade,
When lo! a swarm of bees had strangely stored
In the bleached skeleton their fragrant hoard,
And there a dainty feast for him had made.

Samson's Riddle.

THROUGH Timnath's vineyards as alone he strayed.
Roused from its secret lair, a lion roared.
With his bare hands, and help from Heaven implored,
Lifeless the tawny monster soon he laid.
Passing once more he sought the same green shade,
When lo! a swarm of bees had strangely stored
In the bleached skeleton their fragrant hoard,
And there a dainty feast for him had made.
Thus in our path when threatening danger rises,
Let us trust God and it will disappear:
His providence assumes alarming guises
To make us fly to Him, unseen, but near:
While Love prepares a thousand sweet surprises
God's ways to our weak hearts the more t' endear.

Rev. R. Wilton.

Samson in Prison.

THIS, this is he; softly awhile
Let us not break in upon him;
Oh, change beyond report, thought, or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,
With languished head unpropped
As one past hope, abandoned,
And by himself given over;

In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
O'er-worn and soiled ;
Or do my eyes misrepresent ? Can this be he,
That heroic, that renowned
Irresistible Samson ? whom unarmed
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could withstand ;
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid,
Ran on imbattled armies clad in iron,
And weaponless himself,
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,
Chalybean tempered steel, and frock of mail
Adamantean proof ;
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanced,
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurned them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
Fled from his lion ramp, old warriors turned
Their plated backs under his heel ;
Or grovelling soiled their crested helmets in the dust,
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi famous to this day.
Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulders bore
The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar,
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old,
No journey of a sabbath day, and loaded so ;
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up heaven.
Which shall I first bewail,
Thy bondage or lost sight,
Prison within prison

Inseparably dark?
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain),
Imprisoned now indeed,
In real darkness of the body dwells,
Shut up from outward light
T' incorporate with gloomy night;
For inward light, alas!
Puts forth no visual beam.
Oh, mirror of our fickle state,
Since man on earth unparalleled!
The rarer thy example stands,
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen!
For him I reckon not in high estate
Whom long descent of birth
Or the sphere of fortune raises;
But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
Might have subdued the earth,
Universally crowned with highest praises.

Milton.

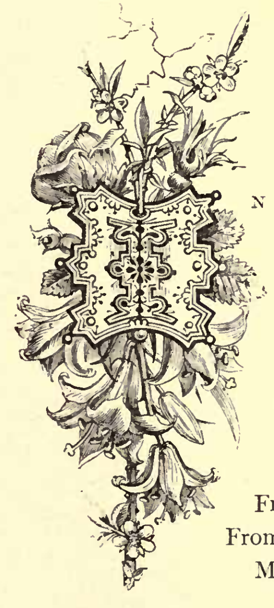


Samson lamenting his Blindness.

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain;
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased.
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me:
They creep, yet see; I, dark in light, exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
Oh, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,
Without all hope of day!
Oh, first created beam, and thou great Word,
"Let there be light," and light was over all;
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The sun to me is dark,
And silent as the moon
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

Milton.

Ruth.



N the land of Bethlehem-judah,
  Let us linger, let us wander;
Ephrath's sorrow, Rachel's pillar,
  Lieth in the valley yonder;
And the yellow barley harvest
  Floods it with a golden glory.
Let us back into the old time,
  Dreaming of her tender story,
Of her true heart's strong devotion,
From beyond the Dead Sea water,
From the heathen land of Moab,—
  Mahlon's wife and Mara's daughter.

On the terebinth and fig tree
  Suns of olden time are shining,
And the dark leaf of the olive
  Scarcely shows its silver lining;
For still noon is on the thicket,
  Where the blue-necked pigeons listen
To their own reproachful music,
  And the red pomegranates glisten;
As a queen a golden circlet,
  As a maid might wear a blossom,
So the valley wears the corn-fields
  Heaving on her fertile bosom;

And the wild grey hills stand o'er them,
All their terraced vineyards swelling
Like the green waves of a forest,
Up to David's mountain dwelling.

Lo ! the princely-hearted Boaz
Moves among his reapers slowly ;
And the widowed child of Moab
Bends behind the gleaners lowly,
Gathering, gleaning, as she goeth
Down the slopes and up the hollows ;
While the love of old Naomi
Like a guardian angel follows.
And he speaketh words of kindness,
Words of kindness, calm and stately ;
Till he breaks the springs of gladness
That lay cold and frozen lately ;
And the love-flowers that had faded
Deep within her bosom lonely,
Slowly open as he questions,
Soon for him to blossom only,
When that spring shall fill with music,
Like an overflowing river,
All his homestead ; and those flowers
Bloom beside his hearth for ever.
Mother of a line of princes,
Wrought into that race's story,
Whom the Godhead breaking earthward
Marked with an unearthly glory !
Still he walks among the reapers,
And the day is nearly over,



BOAZ AND RUTH.

Linger, Boaz, noble-minded!
  Teach us, haughty and unsparing,
Tender care for lowlier station,
  Kindly speech and courteous bearing.

And the lonely mountain partridge
  Seeks afar his scanty cover;
And the flocks of wild blue pigeons,
  That had gleaned behind the gleaner,
Find their shelter in the thicket;
  And the cloudless sky grows sheener
With a sudden flush of crimson,
  Steeping in a fiery lustre
Every sheaf-top in the valley,
  On the hill-side every cluster.

Slowly, slowly fade, fair picture,
  Yellow lights and purple shadows,
On the valley, on the mountain,
  And sweet Ruth among the meadows!
Stay awhile, true heart, and teach us,
  Pausing in thy matron beauty,
Care of elders, love of kindred,
  All unselfish thought and duty.
Linger, Boaz, noble-minded!
  Teach us, haughty and unsparing,
Tender care for lowlier station,
  Kindly speech and courteous bearing.
Still each softest, loveliest colour,
  Shrine the form beloved and living;
Heroine of our heart's first poem,
  Through our childhood's dreamland moving,
When the great old Bible opened,
  And a pleasant pastoral measure,
As our mothers read the story,
  Filled our infant hearts with pleasure.

Dublin University Magazine.

The Presentation of Samuel.

THE rose was in rich bloom on Sharon's plain,
When a young mother, with her firstborn, thence
Went up to Zion; for the boy was vowed
Unto the temple service. By the hand
She led him, and her silent soul, the while,
Oft as the dewy laughter of his eye
Met her sweet serious glance, rejoiced to think
That aught so pure, so beautiful, was hers
To bring before her God. So passed they on.

At last the Fane was reached,
The Earth's One Sanctuary—and rapture hushed
Her bosom. . . . But when that hour
Waned to the farewell moment, when the boy
Lifted through rainbow-gleaming tears his eye
Beseechingly to hers, and half in fear
Turned from the white-robed priest, and round her arm
Clung e'en as joy clings—the deep spring-tide
Of nature then swelled high, and o'er her child
Bending, her soul broke forth, in mingled sounds
Of weeping and sad song. "Alas!" she cried,
"Alas! my boy, thy gentle grasp is on me;
The bright tears quiver in thy pleading eyes,
And now fond thoughts arise,
And silver cords again to earth have won me;
And like a vine thou claspest my full heart—
How shall I hence depart?—

"How the lone paths retrace where thou wert playing
So late, along the mountains, at my side?
And I, in joyous pride,

By every place of flowers my course delaying,
Wove, e'en as pearls, the lilies round thy hair,
Beholding thee so fair!

"And oh! the home whence thy bright smile hath parted,
Will it not seem as if the sunny day
Turned from its door away?
While through its chambers wandering, weary-hearted,
I languish for thy voice, which past me still
Went like a singing rill?

"Under the palm trees thou no more shalt meet me,
When from the fount at evening I return,
With the full water-urn;
Nor will thy sleep's low dove-like breathings greet me
As 'midst the silence of the stars I wake,
And watch for thy dear sake.

"And thou, will slumber's dewy cloud fall round thee,
Without thy mother's hand to smooth thy bed?
Wilt thou not vainly spread
Thine arms, when darkness as a veil hath wound thee,
To fold my neck, and lift up, in thy fear,
A cry which none shall hear?

"What have I said, my child? Will *He* not hear thee,
Who the young ravens heareth from their nest?
Shall He not guard thy rest,
And, in the hush of holy midnight near thee,
Breathe o'er thy soul, and fill its dreams with joy?—
Thou shalt sleep soft, my boy.

"I give thee to thy God—the God that gave thee,
A well-spring of deep gladness, to my heart!
And, precious as thou art,

And pure as dew of Hermon, He shall have thee,
My own, my beautiful, my undefiled!
And thou shalt be His child!

"Therefore, farewell!—I go, my soul may fail me,
As the hart panteth for the water-brooks,
Yearning for thy sweet looks,
But thou, my firstborn, droop not, nor bewail me;
Thou in the Shadow of the Rock shalt dwell,
The Rock of Strength.—Farewell!"

Mrs. Hemans.

Hannah and Samuel.

HER prattling child she brings in white arrayed,
Sorrow and joy in her fond heart contending,
To heavenly service for his lifetime lending,
Far from her sight, the son for whom she prayed.
Each year "a little coat" her hands had made,
She brought to him within God's courts attending.
Each hour her loving heart sweet thoughts was sending
To that fair offering on God's altar laid.
But richly was her sacrifice rewarded,
When to her holy and illustrious son
The foremost place in Israel was accorded;
So let our children be to God devoted
In prayerful training from their birth begun,
And 'mid heaven's thrones, oh, may their names be noted!

Rev. R. Wilton.

The Call of Samuel.

In Israel's fane by silent night
The lamp of God was burning
bright;
And there by viewless angels kept,
Samuel, the child, securely slept.

A voice unknown the stillness broke,
"Samuel!" it called, and thrice it
spoke;
He rose,—he asked, whence came the word?
From Eli? no;—it was the Lord.

Thus early called to serve his God,
In paths of righteousness he trod;
Prophetic visions fired his breast,
And all the chosen tribes were blest.

Speak, Lord! and from our earliest days
Incline our hearts to love Thy ways;
Thy wakening voice hath reached our ear,
Speak, Lord, to us; Thy servants hear.

And ye who know the Saviour's love,
And richly all His mercies prove,
Your timely, friendly aid afford,
That we may early serve the Lord.

Cawood.

Samuel Praying.

"But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child."
1 Sam. ii. 18.

Upon his knees, with reverent air,
The youthful prophet bends;
While, from his parting lips, the prayer
To Israel's God ascends;
His fathers' God, he loves to claim
An interest in that hallowed name.

He prays that all his people's guilt
May be, through grace, forgiven,
And that the blood on altar spilt
May make their peace with heaven,
Through One who, from all else concealed,
Is to his mental eye revealed.

Yes, in the vista dark and dim
Of slow revolving years,
In human guise, a child like him,
The Son of God appears;
And dies on earth a death of pain,
A sinless Lamb for sinners slain.

'Tis this which bids that youthful cheek
With joy celestial glow;
'Tis this which makes each feature speak
Of more than mortals know;
And to the pictured semblance gives
The air of one that breathes and lives.

Pray on, fair boy; and at the sight
Of that sweet form of thine,
May our devotion wax more bright,
Our fervour more divine;
And each, in spirit pure and mild,
Become, like thee, a little child!

Dr. Huie.

David the Shepherd.

"And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to."

1 SAM. xvi. 11, 12.

BESIDE still streams bordered by pastures green
His flock lie down at noon, nor dream of straying,
Their watchful shepherd's gentle voice obeying—
While o'er his head low-drooping branches lean,
And half conceal him with their leafy screen:

Thus by the brook all day contented staying,
Sweet praises on his harp melodious playing,
He sits the centre of that peaceful scene.



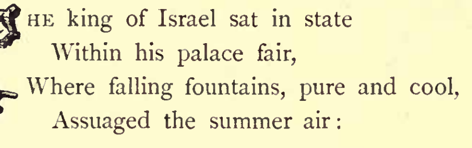
The narrow circle of his native hills
Those pastoral years and first fresh praises bounded,
But now his kingly fame the whole world fills,
His glorious psalms from east to west have sounded:
Yet from his throne for those still streams he sighed,
Which through that quiet valley used to glide.

Rev. R. Wilton.



Saul and the Shepherd Minstrel.

"And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."—1 SAM. xvi. 23.



The king of Israel sat in state
Within his palace fair,
Where falling fountains, pure and cool,
Assuaged the summer air:

But shrouded was the son of Kish,
'Mid all his royal grace;
The tempest of a troubled soul
Swept flashing o'er his face.

In vain were pomp, or regal power,
Or courtier's flattering tone,—
For pride and hatred basely sat
Upon his bosom's throne.

He called upon his minstrel boy,
With hair as bright as gold,
Reclining in a deep recess,
Where drooped the curtain's fold.

Upon his minstrel boy he called,
And forth the stripling came,
Bright beauty on his ruddy brow,
Like morn's enkindling flame.

"Give music," said the moody king,
Nor raised his gloomy eye,
"Thou son of Jesse, bring the harp,
And wake its melody."

He thought upon his father's flock,
  Which long, in pastures green,
He led, while flowed, with silver sound,
  Clear rivulets between.

He thought of Bethlehem's star-lit skies,
  Beneath whose liquid rays
He gazed upon the glorious arch,
  And sang its Maker's praise.

Then boldly o'er the sacred harp
  He poured, in thrilling strain,
The prompting of a joyous heart,
  That knew nor care nor pain.

The monarch, leaning on his hand,
  Drank long the wondrous lay;
And clouds were lifted from his brow,
  As when the sunbeams play.

The purple o'er his heaving breast,
  That throbbed so wild, grew still,
And Saul's clear eye glanced out, as when
  He did Jehovah's will.

Oh, ye who feel the poison-fumes
  Of earth's fermenting care
Steal o'er the sky of hope, and dim
  What Heaven created fair,—

Ask music from a guileless heart,
  High tones with sweetness fraught,
And by that amulet divine
  Subdue the sinful thought.

Mrs. L. H. Sigourney.

The Shepherd Warrior.

IN Elah's vale, at summer eve,
  The pilgrim oft delays
O'er the now faded joys to grieve
  For Israel's brighter days;
And lingers 'neath the silent shade
  Of many an olive wood,
Where once, in glittering lines arrayed,
  The hostile legions stood.

In Elah's vale a brook's cool waves
  With silvery lustre gleam,
And many a lovely floweret laves
  Its blossom in the stream.
The murmuring bee doth revel here,
  And in the sultry ray
Oft doth the wayworn traveller
  His parching thirst allay.

There in the lapse of ages fled,
  The fearless shepherd took
His weapons from the pebbly bed
  Of this pellucid brook;
Upheld by energy divine,
  As sacred records tell,
And soon the giant Philistine
  Before the stripling fell.

Though dimmed be Israel's glory now,
  Forlorn, but not forsaken,
Hope doth impart a fervent glow,
  The breath of prayer to waken,
That still "the bright and morning star"
  May shed a healing ray,
The harbinger to realms afar
  Of Israel's happier day.

T. G. Nicholas.

David and Goliath.

He lays his mantle by, and shepherd's crook,
  And dons the cumbrous armour of the king—
  One moment—then resumes his well-proved sling,
And simple pebbles rounded by the brook:
On wings of faith and prayer the "smooth stone" took
  Its fatal flight urged by the circling string,
  And the prone giant's shield and helmet ring
Hollow, and earth at his loud downfall shook.
So with one promise from the sacred pages
  The streams whereof make glad the Church below—
One text worn smooth by use of rolling ages,
  Our soul's strong enemy we overthrow;
Faith in God's word the help of God engages,
  And "It is written" puts to flight the foe.

Rev. R. Wilton.



"And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance."

1 Sam. xvii. 40—42.

Song of Triumph for David's Victory.

PREPARE! your festal rites prepare!
Let your triumphs rend the air!
Idol gods shall reign no more:
We the living Lord adore!
Let heathen hosts on human helps repose,
Since Israel's God has routed Israel's foes.

Let remotest nations know
Proud Goliath's overthrow.
Fallen, Philistia, is thy trust,
Dagon mingles with the dust!
Who fears the Lord of glory need not fear
The brazen armour or the lifted spear.

See! the routed squadrons fly!
Hark! their clamours rend the sky!
Blood and carnage stain the field!
See, the vanquished nations yield!
Dismay and terror fill the frightened land,
While conquering David routs the trembling band.

Lo! upon the tented field
Royal Saul has thousands killed!
Lo! upon th' ensanguined plain
David has ten thousands slain!
Let mighty Saul his vanquished thousands tell,
While tenfold triumphs David's victories swell.

H. More.

The Harping of David.

"And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well."—1 SAM. xvi. 23.

THE cloud is on the monarch's soul,
Foreshadower of his future doom;
So mists, before the thunders roll,
Come down and wrap the hill in gloom.

Go, call the gentle Bethle'mite,
And bid him wake his sweetest lay,
Perchance that music, pure and light,
May drive the threatening fiend away.

The shepherd boy has brought his lute,
He sings, he strikes the pliant chords!
Each ear is caught, each lip hangs mute,
On the sweet air, the wondrous words.

He stays his hand, th' impassioned strain
Along the lofty palace dies;
The listening courtiers breathe again,
The cloud has left the monarch's eyes.

Ah, no! the measure died not all—
The echoes of that golden rhyme
Are ringing on from fall to fall,
For ever down the stream of time.

At matin hour, in vespers low,
They ring, they ring, those silver bells,
For praise, for plaint, for joy or woe,
Whene'er our strain of worship swells.

The silken thread so wrought and wrought
Into the tissue of its frame,
It hath a tongue for every thought,
Through all its moods, and still the same.

The fair cathedral's arches grand,
Her marble saints with lifted palms,
Her carven pillars ever stand,
Wrapt in a dream of rolling psalms.

The grey old walls beneath the yew,
With modest porch, and taper spire,
Have ripened to their music too,
Rung from the clamorous village choir.

When wakeful men, with ears unstopped,
Through weary hours have told each sound
That broke upon the dark, then dropped
Into the pulseless silence round,

While the strained eye impatient longs
For the first throb of breaking light,
What snatches of those heavenly songs
Have come to him at dead of night!

Some grand Laudate's lofty roll,
Some tender penitential wail,
Have made a music in his soul,
Sweeter than any nightingale.

Come, blessed Psalms! when mists of sin
  Over my soul beclouded lie,
Pierce through the wild world's strife and din,
  And bid the evil spirit fly.

Come, blessed Psalms! when weak and lone
  My heart breaks down, and finds no aid,
And let me find in your deep tone
  Some voice of comfort ready made.

For who shall find, in pain or loss,
  Words of such sweet, sustaining power,
As those that hung about the cross,
  And soothed my SAVIOUR's dying hour?

Mrs. C. F. Alexander.

David in Adullam.

1 CHRON. xi. 15—19.

HID in Adullam's "dry and thirsty" cave,
  Longing he cried—faint with fierce harvest heat—
  "Oh for a draught from Bethlehem's fountain sweet,
Which by the gate wells out its cooling wave!"
Bursting through hosts of foes three warriors brave
Present the crystal cup—his wish complete—
Which, as with life-blood crimsoned, at his feet
He pours, refusing his parched lips to lave.



Mouth of the Cave of Adullam.

So, by Heaven's gate, I see pure waters streaming,
  And, faint and weary, long to drink of them;
For that blest fountain, clear as crystal seeming,
  Gladly earth's broken cisterns I contemn:—
I see the crimson through the crystal gleaming,
  Dear "water of the well of Bethlehem!"

The Death of Samuel.

1 Sam. xxv. 1.

Rest, prophet, rest!
Thou hast fulfilled thy mission! Samuel died.
Loud was the lamentation: tears unfeigned
At Ramah, o'er his tomb long time deplored
Him, last of those who righteous ruled the land,
Ere man sat throned in Israel. All deplored
The Nazarite, to whose unmingled cup
The grape ne'er lent its flavour. Tears unfeigned
Wept him, a holy vessel, set apart
An offering from the birth; yea, dedicate
Ere yet the womb conceived. All spake of him
Who, yet a child, in peaceful slumber laid
Fast by the altar of Jehovah, thrice
Rose at celestial communing, in days
When the Lord's word was precious, and no eye
Saw open vision. At his voice, the brood
Of Baalim and Ashtaroth, abashed,
Fled with their priests from Israel. At his call,
On Ebenezer's plain, celestial fire
Consumed the foe. Who, sole, the king withstood?
The prophet, sole. Whose arm, before him, slew
The Amalekite? The prophet, serving God.
Rest, venerable seer! brow, hoar with age,
Rest in the peace and sabbath of the tomb:
Till, from the bonds of death, God call thee forth
A spirit unfleshed, once more to rise on earth,
And pour Heaven's judgment on the unrighteous king.

Sotheby.

Saul and David.

1 Sam. xviii. 10, 11.

"And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall; and David fled, and escaped that night."—1 Sam. xix. 9, 10.

Deep was the furrow in the royal brow,
When David's hand, lightly as vernal gales
Rippling the brook of Kedron, skimmed the lyre:
He sung of Jacob's youthful son—the child
Of his old age—sold to the Ishmaelite;
His exaltation to the second power
In Pharaoh's realm; his brethren thither sent;
Suppliant they stood before his face, well known,
Unknowing,—till Joseph fell upon the neck
Of Benjamin, his mother's son, and wept.
Unconsciously the warlike shepherd paused;
But when he saw, down the yet quivering string,
The teardrop trembling glide, abashed, he checked,
Indignant at himself, the bursting flood,
And, with a sweep impetuous, struck the chords:
From side to side his hands transversely glance,
Like lightning 'thwart a stormy sea; his voice
Arises 'mid the clang, and straightway calms
Th' harmonious tempest, to a solemn swell
Majestical, triumphant; for he sings
Of Arad's mighty host by Israel's arm
Subdued; of Israel through the desert led

He sings; of him who was their leader, called
By God himself, from keeping Jethro's flock,
To be a ruler o'er the chosen race:—
Kindles the eye of Saul; his arm is poised;—
Harmless the javelin quivers in the wall!

Grahame.

Death of Saul and Jonathan.

2 Sam. i. 17—27.

Ah, Israel! on thy places high
  Thy beauty bendeth low;
Thy mighty sons dishonoured lie,
  While vaunts thy haughty foe!
Let none the tidings send to Gath,
  Or Askelon convey;
Lest joy o'er Judah's darkened path
  Should prompt their daughters' lay!

Gilboa! on thy fated hill
  May never dew be found;
Nor gentle rain from heaven distil,
  Nor offerings spread the ground:
For there the brave have bowed the head,
  And there to fear resigned,
The Lord's anointed vilely fled,
  And left his shield behind.

Oft Jonathan, with bow of might,
  Had marred the hero's plume;
Nor empty did the falchion bright
  Of Saul its sheath resume:
Their lives were lovely, and 'twas meet
  That death should join their names;
The eagle's swiftness graced their feet,
  The lion's strength their frames.

Weep, maids of Israel! weep for Saul,
  Your splendid robes who won;
And mourn your king's, your father's fall,
  Who put your jewels on:
How, 'midst the battle's carnage red,
  Are all the mighty slain!
O Jonathan! thy blood was shed,
  Where once thou thought'st to reign!

My Jonathan, my brother, sore
  Am I distressed for thee!
Than love of youthful maiden more
  Has been thy love to me:
How are thy mighty fallen low
  On slaughter's crimsoned field;
While Israel mourns her broken bow,
  Her broken spear and shield!

Dr. Huie.



David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan.



THY beauty, Israel, is fled,
Sunk to the dead!
How are the valiant fallen! The slain
Thy mountains stain.
Oh let it not in Gath be known,
Nor in the streets of Ascalon!

Lest that sad story should excite
Their dire delight;
Lest in the torrent of our woe
Their pleasures flow;
Lest their triumphant daughters ring
Their cymbals, and curs'd pæans sing.

You hills of Gilboa, never may
You offerings pay;
No morning dew nor fruitful showers
Clothe you with flowers;
Saul and his arms there made a spoil,
As if untouched with sacred oil!

The bow of noble Jonathan
Great battles won;
His arrows on the mighty fed,
With slaughter red.
Saul never raised his arm in vain;
His sword still glutted with the slain.

How lovely! O how pleasant! when
They lived with men!
Than eagles swifter; stronger far
Than lions are;
Whom love in life so strongly tied,
The stroke of death could not divide.

Sad Israel's daughters, weep for Saul;
Lament his fall;
Who fed you with the earth's increase,
And crowned with peace;
With robes of Tyrian purple deckt,
And gems, which sparkling light reflect.

How are thy worthies by the sword
Of war devoured!
O Jonathan, the better part
Of my torn heart!
The savage rocks have drunk thy blood,
My brother! O how kind! how good!

Thy love was great; O never more
To man, man bore!
No woman, when most passionate,
Loved at that rate!
How are the mighty fall'n in fight!
They and their glory set in night!

Sandys.





"Now these be the last words ot David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel."

2 SAM. xxiii. 1.

The Sweet Psalmist of Israel.

2 Sam. xiii. 1.

Oh for the harp that David swept,
At whose divine entrancing sound
The evil spirit distance kept,
While holier visions hovered round!
Oh for such harp, in these our days,
To speak a God's a Saviour's praise!

Then e'en on earth might song outpour
That sweet, that full, triumphant strain,
Whose graceful notes should heavenward soar,
And there a gracious audience gain;
While here below its hallowed power
Should aid devotion's happiest hour.

Christian, wouldst thou such harp possess?
May grace anoint thine eye to see,
And on thy mind this truth impress,
The *heart* that instrument may be:
For never harp or lyre revealed
Such music as the heart can yield.

Not in its unregenerate state
Canst thou expect those strains to hear;
By sin unstrung, its accents grate
In discord on a heaven-touched ear;
Renewed by grace, and tuned by love,
Its harmony ascends above.

Oh! then with melody it seems
  To vibrate from each trembling string;
Each kindling thought and feeling teems
  With songs as sweet as seraphs sing;
And music, art could never frame,
Is breathed to its Redeemer's name.

Barton.

Nathan and David.

"And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. . . . And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. . . . And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."—2 SAM. xii. 5, 7, 13, 14.

WHEN bitter thoughts, of conscience born,
  With sinners wake at morn,
When from our restless couch we start,
With fevered lips and withered heart,
Where is the spell to charm those mists away,
And make new morning in that darksome day?
One draught of spring's delicious air,
One steadfast thought, that GOD is there.

These are Thy wonders, hourly wrought,
  Thou Lord of time and thought,

Lifting and lowering souls at will,
Crowding a world of good or ill
Into a moment's vision: even as light
Mounts o'er a cloudy ridge, and all is bright,
From west to east one thrilling ray
Turning a wintry world to May.

Wouldst thou the pangs of guilt assuage?
Lo here an open page!
Where heavenly mercy shines as free,
Written in balm, sad heart, for thee.
Never so fast, in silent April shower,
Flushed into green the dry and leafless bower,
As Israel's crownèd mourner felt
The dull hard stone within him melt.

The absolver saw the mighty grief,
And hastened with relief;—
"The Lord forgives; thou shalt not die:"—
'Twas gently spoke, yet heard on high,
And all the band of angels, used to sing
In heaven, accordant to his raptured string,
Who many a month had turned away
With veilèd eyes, nor owned his lay,

Now spread their wings, and throng around
To the glad mournful sound,
And welcome, with bright open face,
The broken heart to love's embrace.
The rock is smitten, and to future years
Springs ever fresh the tide of holy tears,[1]

[1] The fifty-first Psalm.

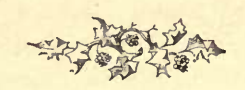
And holy music, whispering peace
Till time and sin together cease.

There drink: and when ye are at rest,
With that free Spirit blest,[1]
Who to the contrite can dispense
The princely heart of innocence,
If ever, floating from faint earthly lyre,
Was wafted to your soul one high desire,
By all the trembling hope ye feel,
Think on the minstrel as ye kneel:

Think on the shame, that dreadful hour
When tears shall have no power,
Should his own lay th' accuser prove,
Cold while he kindled others' love:
And let your prayer for charity arise,
That his own heart may hear his melodies,
And a true voice to him may cry,
"Thy God forgives—thou shalt not die."

Keble.

1 Psa. li. 12: "Uphold me with Thy *free* Spirit." The original word seems to mean "ingenuous, princely, noble." Read Bishop Horne's Paraphrase on the verse.



Absalom's Pillar.

"Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale:[1] for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance; and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place."

2 SAM. xviii. 18.

A PILLAR rears its mouldering head amid the waste of years.
In deep Engedi's vale it stands alone,
A tapering mass of monumental stone—
A shapely pile, where all around is rude,
But speechless in its hoary solitude:
Ask ye the circling rocks (from whose torn bed
It slowly reared its desolated head)—
Ask ye the silent column whence it came?
Raised by what hand, or sacred to what name?
Answer or speech is none that tells the tale
Of the dark pillar of Engedi's dale.
'Twas Absalom who reared it: for he said,
"I have no son to live, when I am dead,
And keep my name's remembrance from the grave:"
So his own name to that lone pile he gave.
And to this day 'tis callèd "Absalom's place"—
A monument of glory and disgrace!
It might have stood, beneath the sky's blue cope,
Emblem of pledgeless love and baffled hope:
A barren type of him whose lonely state
Soared o'er his fellows, grand, yet desolate:
And many a pilgrim to that pile had come
To heave the sigh for sonless Absalom.

[1] Near the Dead Sea.—See Gen. xiv. 17.

It stands a warning beacon, and a mark
Of stormy deeds and retribution dark;
A boding heap, a thing to fear and shun,
Memorial of a most unnatural son:
Cold to the beam, unsoftened by the shower,
Dead to the sweet and renovating power
Of Nature, in her best and balmiest hour.
It speaks of one alike unmoved and sere
Beneath a father's smile, a father's tear:
Of one whose loveless and unloving gloom
Gave to the meek affections bud nor bloom.
And when that pillar, crumbled to the base,
Shall leave no tidings of its name or place,
The word of truth, that will not pass away,
Shall keep the blasting record from decay.

Beresford.

A Psalm of David when flying from his son Absalom.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?
My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me:
For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.





MOUNT HERMON.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted
in me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his
countenance.

O my God, my soul is cast down within me:
Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan,
And of the Hermonites (*i. e.*, the summits of Hermon), from the hill Mizar.
Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts:
All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.
Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime,
And in the night his song shall be with me,
And my prayer unto the God of my life.
I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me;
While they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted
within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation:
O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me;
Let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.
Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy:
Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted
within me?
Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God. *Psalms* xlii., xliii.

Tomb of Absalom.

Is this thy tomb, amid the mournful shades
Of the deep valley of Jehoshaphat,
Thou son of David? Kidron's gentle brook
Is murmuring near, as if it fain would tell
Thy varied history. Methinks I see
Thy graceful form, thy smile, thy sparkling eye,
The glorious beauty of thy flowing hair,
And that bright eloquent lip whose cunning stole
The hearts of all the people. Didst thou waste
The untold treasures of integrity,
The gold of conscience for their light applause,
Thou fair dissembler?

Say, rememb'rest thou
When o'er yon flinty steep of Olivet
A sorrowing train went up? Dark frowning seers,
Denouncing judgment on a rebel prince,
Passed sadly on; and next a crownless king,
Walking in sad and humbled majesty,
While hoary statesmen bent upon his brow
Indignant looks of tearful sympathy.
What caused the weeping there?

Thou heard'st it not;
For thou within the city walls didst hold
Thy revel, brief and base. And could'st thou set
Th' embattled host against thy father's life,
The king of Israel, and the loved of God?



Tomb of Absalom in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

He, 'mid the evils of his changeful lot,
Saul's moody hatred, stern Philistia's spear,
His alien wanderings, and his warrior toil,
Found nought so bitter as the rankling thorn
Set, by thy madness of ingratitude,
Deep in his yearning soul.

What were thy thoughts
When in the mesh of thine own tresses snared
Amid the oak, whose quiet verdure mocked
Thy misery? Wert thou forsook by all
Who shared thy meteor greatness, and constrained
To learn, in that strange solitude of agony,
A traitor hath no friends?—What were thy thoughts
When death, careering on the triple dart
Of vengeful Joab, found thee? To thy God
Rose there one cry of penitence, one prayer
For that unmeasured mercy which can cleanse
Unbounded guilt? Or turned thy stricken heart
Toward him who o'er thy infant graces watched
With tender pride, and all thy sins of youth
In blindfold fondness pardoned?

Hark! the breeze
That sweeps the palm-groves of Jerusalem
Bears the continuous wail,—"O Absalom!
My son! my son!"

We turn us from thy tomb,
Usurping prince! Thy beauty and thy grace
Have perished with thee, but thy fame survives—
The ingrate son that pierced a father's heart.

Mrs. L. H. Sigourney.



Jehovah imparting Comfort.

"The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; in my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and He did hear my voice out of His temple, and my cry did enter into His ears."—2 SAM. xxii. 6, 7.

OH, thou who driest the mourner's tear,
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We could not flee to Thee!
The friends who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes, are flown;
And he who has but tears to give
Must weep those tears alone.
But Thou wilt heal that broken heart
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

When joy no longer soothes or cheers,
And e'en the hope that threw
A moment's sparkle o'er our tears
Is dimmed and vanished too;
Oh! who could bear life's stormy doom,
Did not the wing of love
Come brightly wafting through the gloom
Our peace-branch from above?
There sorrow touched by Thee grows bright,
With more than rapture's ray;
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day.

Moore.

Barzillai the Gileadite.

"And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee."—2 SAM. xix. 34-37.

SON of Jesse!—let me go,
Why should princely honours stay me?—
Where the streams of Gilead flow,
Where the light first met mine eye,
Thither would I turn and die;—
Where my parents' ashes lie,
King of Israel!—bid them lay me.

Bury me near my sire revered,
Whose feet in righteous paths so firmly trod,
Who early taught my soul with awe
To heed the prophets and the law,
And to my infant heart appeared
Majestic as a God:—
Oh! when this sacred dust
The cerements of the tomb shall burst,
Might I be worthy at His feet to rise
To yonder blissful skies,
Where angel hosts resplendent shine,
Jehovah! Lord of hosts, the glory shall be Thine.

Cold age upon my breast
Hath shed a frost like death,
The wine-cup hath no zest,
The rose no fragrant breath;
Music from my ear hath fled,
Yet still one sweet tone lingereth there,
The blessing that my mother shed
Upon my evening prayer.
Dim is my wasted eye
To all that beauty brings,
The brow of grace—the form of symmetry
Are half-forgotten things;—
Yet one bright hue is vivid still,
A mother's holy smile, that soothed my sharpest ill.

Memory, with traitor-tread,
Methinks, doth steal away
Treasures that the mind had laid
Up for a wintry day.
Images of sacred power,
Cherished deep in passion's hour,
Faintly now my bosom stir,
Good and evil like a dream
Half obscured and shadowy seem,
Yet with a changeless love my soul remembereth her,
Yea, it remembereth her:
Close by her blessed side make ye my sepulchre.

Mrs. L. H. Sigourney.





Rizpah.

"And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

2 Sam. xxi. 10.

Oh! moments to others, but ages to me,
I have sat with the brow of the dead at my knee;
In the purple of night, at the flushing of noon,
I have bent o'er the cherished, that left me—how soon!
And I looked on the dimness that froze on the eye,
So bright in its burning,—its glances so high!
And I watched the consumer, as over he crept,
And feasted where beauty and manhood still slept.

I loved the dark eye, though its kindling was dead,
And the pride of that lip, though its blushing was shed.
Oh, sons of the kingly! how lovely in death!
Though your frown, when ye died, flitted not with your breath;
As ye lay in your strength, so unmoving and chill,
There was daring, calm daring, that death could not kill;
So mighty to conquer, and never to fly,
And life in its fulness,—oh, how did ye die!

The eagle at dawning stooped down in his pride,
With the blood-drops of princes his pinions were dyed;
But he looked on that eye, and he shrouded his own;
In your sternness of sleeping he left you alone.
The leopard at evening leaped onward in play,
And he plunged where I knelt, as he scented his prey;
But he knew the strong arm he had met in his mood,
And he crept to his lair like a fawn of the wood.

Oh, yon moon, with her cold light, had maddened my brain!
In the wildness of midnight they waken again:
In their softness and wrath, in their sadness and glee,
With their fierce scowl in battle, their bright smile to me;
The frown when they struck 'mid the carnage begun,
The smile as we met when the conflict was done;
And there is not in Judah a mother so blest
As I with my dead, in their desolate rest.

Anon.



King David's Strait.

"So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man."—2 Sam. xxiv. 13, 14.

O Lord our God! how wonderful
That Thy dread wrath should be—
Thou, in Thy strength—more merciful
Than beings frail as we!
Yea, rather would I brave Thy might,
The thunder, fire, and storm,
The bared arm of the Infinite,
Than man, the cruel worm.

"I feel my sin, I choose my doom,
I trust Thee though Thou slay;
Ten thousand midnights cannot gloom
Thy pity's tender ray:
Wroth art Thou with us now, and deep,
Deep must our sufferings be,
But through Thy vengeance' 'sternest sweep'
I'll trust to none but Thee.

"Take back my choice, thou man of God!
And pray when thou hast done:
The sword is ravenous for blood,
Though wielded by a son;

And Famine with its silent sting,
  That dull, slow serpent-foe;
God, let Thy angel spread his wing,
  And through my kingdom go!"

'Twas said: and Pestilence went forth
  To reap for Death and Hell,
To make a garner of the earth
  Where'er his sickle fell.
No step was heard: he spake no word:
  All silently wrought he,
Like a labourer grim, till the twilight dim,
  And again with the sun rose he.

He strode along, a conqueror,
  By his single power, of more
Than thrice ten thousand warriors
  E'er slew 'mid battles' roar:
Yet not a banner round him wreathed,
  The trump was blown by none;
He only stepped; he only breathed—
  Breathed once—and life was gone.

He strode along, the breadth and length
  Of Judah, prostrate lay
Its myriad hopes, its gathered strength,
  His work was but to slay!
And captives weary of the light,
  And babes unused to sigh,
And old mailed warriors in their might—
  Their work was but to die.
Two days, two nights, and then a voice
  Bade the avenger cease:
He heard the word—he sheathed his sword—
  And Israel slept in peace!

Miss Jewsbury.

David's Submission to God.

MAN hath a voice severe,
His neighbour's fault to blame,
A wakeful eye, a listening ear,
To note his brother's shame.

He, with suspicious glance,
The curtained breast doth read,
And raise th' accusing balance high
To weigh the doubtful deed.

O Thou, whose piercing thought
Doth note each secret path,
For mercy to Thy throne we flee,
From man's condemning wrath.

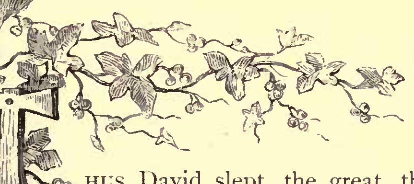
Thou, who dost dimness mark
In heaven's resplendent way,
And folly in that angel host
Who serve Thee night and day;

How fearless should our trust
In Thy compassion be,
When from our brother of the dust
We dare appeal to Thee!

Mrs. L. H. Sigourney.

The Death of David.

"Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead."—1 CHRON. xxix. 26—28.



THUS David slept, the great, the wise, the good;
The man who long, by Heaven's appointment, stood
His country's friend; who met the giant foe,
While yet a ruddy youth, and laid him low;
The patriot prince, who guided Israel's bands
With firm integrity and skilful hands;
The holy seer, who, rapt to future times,
Sang of Messiah dying for the crimes
Of countless ages—his illustrious Son,
His glorious deeds, His reign on earth begun;
The sacred hand, who oft attuned the lyre
To themes prophetic, with a prophet's fire;
He who with Israel's God communed, and wept
O'er Israel's wrongs, and Israel's honour kept,
A trust inviolate, from men of blood:
Great David softly slept—he slept in God,
"Of honours, days, and riches full—a calm release!
And to his fathers laid," reposed in peace.

Bishop.

Building the Temple.

"There was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building."—1 KINGS vi. 7.

THEN towered the palace, then in awful state
The temple reared its everlasting gate:
No workman's steel, no pond'rous axes rung;
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.
Majestic silence! Then the harp awoke,
The cymbal clanged, the deep-voiced trumpet spoke;
And Salem spread her suppliant arms abroad,
Viewed the descending flame, and blessed the present God.

Bishop Heber.

Solomon's Temple.

BRIGHT as a vision, silent as a thought,
Slowly ascending cloud-like to the skies,
Drawn heavenwards by soft warblings faintly caught
From lips angelic, see yon temple rise—
God's glorious house of prayer and sacrifice—
Gold, marble, cedar curiously wrought,
The fair creation of that monarch wise
Whose mind capacious was divinely taught.
A grander temple now, unseen, is growing,
The bright and undecaying home of grace,
Its living stones from every country flowing
And from all time. Oh! when that temple holy
Appears in perfect beauty, may a place
Be found for me and for my service lowly!

Rev. R. Wilton.

The Dedication of the Temple.

"It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

2 CHRON. V. 13, 14.

EACH pillar of the temple rang—
The trumpets sounded loud and keen,
And every minstrel blithely sang,
With harps and cymbals oft between.
And while those minstrels sang and played,
The mystic cloud of glory fell,
That shadowy light—that splendid shade
In which Jehovah pleased to dwell.

It slowly fell and hovered o'er
The outspread forms of cherubim;
The priests could bear the sight no more,
Their eyes with splendour dim.
The king cast off his crown of pride,
And bent him to the ground,
And priest and warrior side by side
Knelt humbly all around.

Deep awe fell down on every soul,
  Since God was present there,
And not the slightest breathing stole
  Upon the stilly air;
Till he, their prince, with earth-bent eyes,
  And head uncrowned and bare,
And hands stretched forth in reverend guise,
  To heaven preferred his prayer.

That prayer arose from off the ground,
  Upon the perfumed breath
Which steaming censers poured around
  In many a volumed wreath.
That prayer was heard; and heavenly fire
  Upon the altar played,
And burnt the sacrificial pyre
  Beneath the victim laid.

And thrice resplendent from above
  The cloud of glory beamed,
And with unmingled awe and love
  Each beating bosom teemed.
They bowed them on the spacious floor,
  With heaven-averted eye,
And blessed His name, who deigned to pour
  His presence from on high.

H. Rogers.



Solomon before the Altar.

‘ And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven. And he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart."—1 KINGS viii. 22, 23.

Lo! the pious monarch stands
  And lifts his heart and eyes,
Spreads to heaven his praying hands,
  To Him who fills the skies!
Never king appeared so great,
  Himself not half so glorious shone,
Clad in all his robes of state,
  And on his ivory throne.

See, through him, the heavenly King
  Who for His subjects prays,
Israel's Intercessor! Sing
  And magnify His grace;
Praise our Lord, who ever lives
  To save and bless His saints forgiven,
Till He to Himself receives,
  And blesses us in heaven.

C. Wesley.

The Temple and the Church.

JOHN iv. 21, 23, 24.

O THOU to whom, in ancient time,
The lyre of Hebrew bards was strung,
Whom kings adored in song sublime,
And prophets praised with glowing tongue.

Not now, on Zion's height alone,
Thy favoured worshipper may dwell,
Nor where, at sultry noon, Thy Son
Sat, weary, by the patriarch's well.

From every place below the skies,
The grateful song, the fervent prayer,—
The incense of the heart—may rise
To heaven, and find acceptance there.

In this Thy house, whose doors we now
For social worship first unfold,
To Thee the suppliant throng shall bow,
While circling years on years are rolled.

To Thee shall Age, with snowy hair,
And Strength and Beauty, bend the knee,
And Childhood lisp, with reverent air,
Its praises and its prayers to Thee.

O Thou to whom, in ancient time,
The lyre of prophet bards was strung,
To Thee, at last, in every clime
Shall temples rise and praise be sung.

Pierpont.

Morning in Judea.

"Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."

PSA. civ. 20—24.

THE sun is up—from Carmel's woody brow
His orient radiance rushes like a flood—
A generous stream by whose fresh influence grow
The flowers that blossom, and the trees that bud:
The moon that rose at eve as if the blood
Of life was in her veins, turns pale as clay
From which the life has fled; the stars that stud
The midnight sky by thousands, glide away
Like foam-blown bells that burst within the ocean's bay.

The night—e'en like a fierce despotic king
That wraps the nation in a fearful shade,
Dark as the darkness which the death-glooms fling
Around the sepulchre where bones are laid,—
The night departs, as when with power arrayed,
Some generous monarch from his throne has hurled
The gloomy tyrant, humbled and dismayed;
For now the gates of morning are unfurled,
And light and loveliness and joy possess the world.

The dew-bent lilies, by the breezes kissed,
Awake in beauty on their grassy beds,
Like lovely infants from the mother's breast,
That joy to pillow their protected heads;

On Zion's holy hill the green grape sheds
Its sweet perfume; the fig tree is in blow;
On fertile Lebanon the corn-field spreads
Its store, and to the winds that o'er it go,
Heaves as the billows heave with undulating flow.



On Gilead's pastures green the bleating flocks
Disport, in Jordan's stream the fishes play;
The snow-white goats are gambolling on the rocks,
The insects dancing in the sunny ray;
The humming bees upon their early way
Are wandering happily from flower to flower;
And all unseen, where twilight shadows grey

Are lingering still, the wild birds in the bower
Pour out their choral song unto the matin hour.

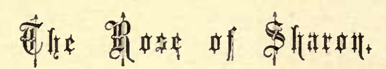
And man comes from his dwelling forth,—afar
He casts his eye o'er all the happy sight,
And lifts his heart to Him whose mercies are
Each morning new, whose faithfulness each night;
To Him who sends the sun in all His might
To bid the forests bud, the flowerets bloom;
Who fills the lower creatures with delight,
Who sweeps the shadows from the hearts of gloom,
And feeds th' aspiring soul with hopes beyond the tomb.

Knox.

Solomon's Glory.

SEATED upon a throne, superb and high,
Of ivory, with finest gold inlaid—
Crowned with a blaze of jewels, and arrayed
In robes magnificent of Tyrian dye,
The king "in all his glory" strikes the eye
With wonder—from amidst luxurious shade
Of purple canopy, and proud parade
Of couchant lions keeping watch hard by.
But all that royal pomp the palm must yield
In texture rare and beauty of array
To roses wild and lilies of the field,
Which bloom and perish in a single day:—
Lord, if the flowers are decked in robes so fair,
What clothing shall Thy saints in glory wear?

Rev. R. Wilton.



"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys."
SONG OF SOL. ii. 1.

When the rose in Sharon blooming
Sheds sweet fragrance on the air,
Each loved tint new grace assuming,
Doth its varied charms declare.

When the lily 'neath the mountain
Weeps in Hermon's glittering dew;
Pure as Kedron's crystal fountain
Shines its robe of spangled hue.

Fair are Sharon's blooming roses,
Rich the lily of the vale;
'Mid each blush delight reposes,
Nectared sweets embalm the gale.

But when Jesus, Lord of heaven,
He whom saints with love adore,
Kindly says to man, forgiven,
"Go, thou contrite, sin no more,"—

Radiant beauty He discloses,
While He saves from sorrow's doom;
Sweeter than the blush of roses,
Fairer than the lily's bloom.

Tappan.

The Disobedient Prophet.

"It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord."—1 KINGS xiii. 26.

PROPHET of God, arise and take
With thee the words of wrath divine,
The scourge of heaven, to shake
O'er yon apostate shrine.

Where angels down the lucid stair
Came hovering to our sainted sires,
Now, in the twilight, glare
The heathen's wizard fires.

Go, with thy voice the altar rend,
Scatter the ashes, be the arm,
That idols would befriend,
Shrunk at thy withering charm!

Then turn thee, for thy time is short,
But trace not o'er the former way,
Lest idol pleasures court
Thy heedless soul astray.

Thou know'st how hard to hurry by,
Where on the lonely woodland road
Beneath the moonlit sky
The festal warblings flowed;

Where maidens to the Queen of Heaven
Wove the gay dance round oak or palm,
Or breathed their vows at even
In hymns as soft as balm.

Or thee perchance a darker spell
Enthrals: the smooth stones of the flood,[1]
By mountain grot or fell,
Pollute with infant's blood;

The giant altar on the rock,
The cavern whence the timbrel's call
Affrights the wandering flock:—
Thou long'st to search them all.

Trust not the dangerous path again—
Oh, forward step and lingering will!
Oh, loved and warned in vain!
And wilt thou perish still?

Thy message given, Thine home in sight,
To the forbidden feast return?
Yield to the false delight
Thy better soul could spurn?

Alas, my brother! round thy tomb
In sorrow kneeling, and in fear,
We read the pastor's doom
Who speaks and will not hear.

The grey-haired saint may fail at last,
The surest guide a wanderer prove;
Death only binds us fast
To the bright shore of Love.

Keble.

[1] "Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion, they, they are thy lot."—ISA. lvii. 6.



Alas, my brother! round thy tomb
In sorrow kneeling, and in fear,
We read the pastor's doom
Who speaks and will not hear.

The Prophets of Baal.

1 Kings xviii.

"Ye prophets of Baal! let an offering be laid
On the altar which you to your idol have made;
Let an offering be laid on the altar I rear
To the Lord that I worship, the Lord that I fear.
Pray ye to your god, while to my God I pray,
For the fire of His power to consume it away,
And let Him, the Omnipotent, who hath bestowed
The boon we request, be acknowledged as God."

When Elijah had spoken, an offering was laid
On the altar which they to their idol had made;
And the prophets of Baal to devotion were given
From the morn till the noon, from the noon till the even;
But the voice of their prayer passed like winds of the sky
That blow o'er the desert, and bring no reply;
And they smote them with lancets, and leaped in despair,
But the god of their worship was deaf to their prayer.

"Ye prophets of Baal! cry aloud, cry aloud!
Perhaps he is wrapt in his thoughts like a cloud!
Cry aloud, cry aloud with your voices of woe,
Perhaps he is now in pursuit of his foe!
Cry aloud, cry aloud, like a trumpet of war,
Perhaps he is gone on some journey afar!
Cry aloud, cry aloud, in your agony deep,
Perhaps he is laid on his pillow of sleep!"

When Elijah had spoken, an altar was reared
To the Lord that he worshipped, the Lord that he feared.
And he bowed him in prayer, and the fire was bestowed,
And the God of his sires was acknowledged as God.
And the prophets of Baal, who had offered in vain,
Were led to the banks of the Kishon and slain;
For the God of their worship appeared not to save
The blood of the heathen that crimsoned the wave.

Knox.

What doest thou here, Elijah ?

1 Kings xix. 13.

On Horeb's brow the Tishbite stands,
Encompassed round with burning sands;
He felt the sullen earthquake's shock,
The heaving ground, the reeling rock;
Beheld the whirlwind's awful force
Rending the mountains in its course,
And fire that seemed to fill the sky,
Showing that Israel's God drew nigh.
Distinctly in the desert drear,
A still small voice now strikes his ear,
"Elijah, say, what dost thou here?"

"I have been jealous for the Lord,
Contemning Ahab's cruel sword;
And stood on Carmel's height unmoved,
Where I thy people's sin reproved;
For they Thy altars have o'erthrown,
Thy prophets slain,—and I alone
Assert the honour of Thy name."

With whom dwells now this holy flame,
If the great Judge should now appear?
How few like him with hearts sincere,
Durst thus avow what do they here!

Am I then jealous for the Lord,
Or, like to Israel, scorn His word?
Like them, are idols my desire?
Quench I, like them, the Spirit's fire?
Alas! when with Thy saints I pray,
To realms remote my thoughts will stray,
Intent on schemes of worldly pleasure,
Ambition's dream or earth-born treasure,
Till, roused, I start with sudden fear
As Conscience whispers in my ear,
"Can God approve what thou dost here?"

O Lord! henceforward let it be
My whole desire to follow Thee—
To glory in my Saviour's cross,
And all beside to count as dross.
Elijah-like each sin I'll slay—
Like him each high command obey—
Press forward on the narrow road,
Deriving strength and hope from God.
Then Death's dread voice I need not fear;
Jesus shall whisper in mine ear,
"My servant, thou hast well done here!"

Skeen.





Elijah fed by Ravens.

"So he went and did according to the word of the Lord: or he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook."—1 KINGS xvii. 5, 6.

SORE was the famine throughout all the bounds
Of Israel, when Elijah, by command
Of God, journeyed to Cherith's failing brook.

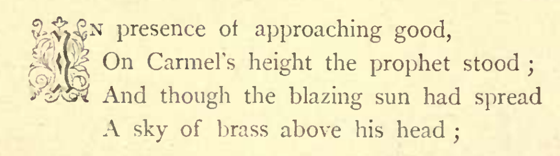
No raindrops fall, no dew-fraught cloud, at morn
Or closing eve, creeps slowly up the vale;
The withering herbage dies; among the palms
The shrivelled leaves send to the summer gale
An autumn rustle; no sweet songster's lay
Is warbled from the branches; scarce is heard
The rill's faint brawl. The prophet looks around,
And trusts in God, and lays his silvered head
Upon the flowerless bank; serene he sleeps,
Nor wakes till dawning: then with hands enclasped
And heavenward face, and eyelids closed, he prays
To Him who manna on the desert showered,
To Him who from the rock made fountains gush:
Entranced the man of God remains; till roused
By sound of wheeling wings, with grateful heart,
He sees the ravens fearless by his side
Alight, and leave the heaven-provided food.

Grahame.



Mount Carmel.

"And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not."—1 KINGS xviii. 42-44.



IN presence of approaching good,
On Carmel's height the prophet stood;
And though the blazing sun had spread
A sky of brass above his head;

Though the parched earth through years nor knew
The gracious rain nor gentle dew ;
Strong in the promise and the power,
Faith's ear drank in the coming shower,
And now with prayer he waits the hour.

Six times the prophet's servant gave
His eager glances to the wave,
But the horizon made no sign
Across its hard and burning line.
But faith is strong : he looked again :
A small cloud issued from the main,
Small as the least of clouds that lie
Like snowflakes on a summer's sky.
Within him leaped the prophet's soul,
As on the spreading blessing stole ;
Till with their freight the dark heavens bowed,
And rushed the torrent long and loud,
And Judah's parched and withered sod
Now felt a long-neglected God.

How oft, like Judah, we have known
No God but idols of our own ;
Our soul's best powers, all high desires,
Withered by sin's consuming fires !
Forgive us, Lord, and from above
Drop gentle dews that nourish love,
Till the full tide of grace divine
Rush on our hearts, and make us Thine.

Snow.

Translation of Elijah.

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces."—2 KINGS ii. 11, 12.

BY Judah's vales and olive-glades,
Where Eastern fruits entwine,
Her bowers of rose and palm tree shades,
Her fields of corn and wine,
Elijah and Elisha passed,
And well they knew it was the last,
The last dear hour to friendship given,
Before the fire-car and the blast
Should bear the prophet up to heaven.

How fondly then Elisha hung
On all his aged master spoke!
How dear each word, that from his tongue
Like dying farewell broke!
Friendship's a sun that ever seems
Brightest in its departing beams,
And never to the full we feel
The depth, and warmth, and force of love,
Till death comes in, the gem to steal,
And those so dear have passed above;
Then we discover by the smart
How they entwined around the heart.

They went along, and o'er their head,
  High in the fields of air,
Appeared a beauteous cloud of red,
And as against the breeze it fled,
  It seemed a seraph fair;
One of those spirits who assume
  The lurid flame in all its forms,
To guard, to punish, to consume,
  To wield the lightning-sword of storms.

To earth it came,
That beauteous flame,
The friends, who dearly loved, it parted,
Its mantle round
The prophet wound,
Then back to its own heaven it darted;
And oh! Elisha's wildered eyes
Followed his master to the skies,
As we to-day
Perceive the ray
Of glory when a Christian dies!
Sweet parting this—but not for us
To pass to those bright regions thus.
We must go through the cold dark stream;
But ah!—if faith's celestial beam
  Shine over, all will then be bright,
  And we scarce need wish for the car of light,
So fair will the waters seem!

Edmeston.



The Syrian Captain.

2 Kings v.

"To wash in Jordan's limpid stream,"
Of old the holy prophet said;
"Its waves with healing virtue teem,
And health and purity they spread."

The Syrian captain vainly thought
The streams his native land supplied
Might yield the benefit he sought,
And rival Israel's fairest tide.

Too little for his courtly gait
The simple rule Elisha gave,
Nothing to suit his sumptuous state
He saw in Jordan's flowing wave.

Incensed, he turned his steps aside,
"And is this all?" disdainful said,—
"Some greater thing he might have tried,
And on the place his hand have laid.

"Abana's,—Pharpar's rivers flow,
With health and healing influence filled;
In them I'll bathe my limbs, and show
The powerful virtue which they yield."



BARADA, THE ANCIENT ABANA.

His humble menials wiselier deem,
  Urge him to prove the small command;
And now emerging from the stream,
  In fairest health they see him stand.

The Syrian captain's case is ours :—
  We scorn to wash in Jordan's wave,
And fancy our own boasted powers
  From woe and from disease will save.

Let us inquire, in humble faith,
  What waters may effectual be
To save us from the power of death,
  From sickness and from sorrow free.

Let all who hail the gospel light
  Our greater Prophet hear and live,
No substituted splendid rite
  Can holy absolution give.

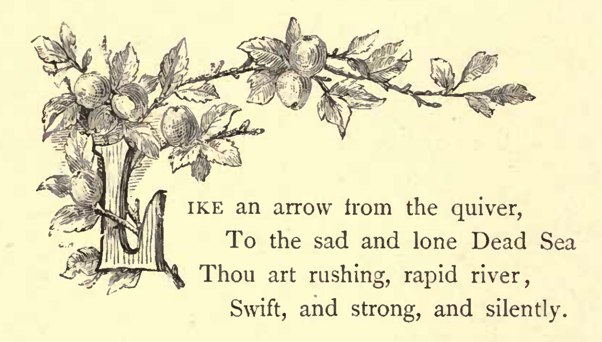
Rivers of oil, or wine, poured forth,
  Shall fail to wash the soul from sin;
Rich sacrifice is nothing worth
  To heal the wound the heart within.

The Captain of our hope and faith
  Obeyed the Father's will and died;
He died an ignominious death,
  Was persecuted, crucified!

His followers now His cross must wear,
  Must tread the suffering path He trod;
If rough the road, and full of care,
  The end is safe,—it leads to God.

Anon.

The Jordan.



LIKE an arrow from the quiver,
To the sad and lone Dead Sea
Thou art rushing, rapid river,
Swift, and strong, and silently.

Through the dark green foliage stealing,
Like a silver ray of light,
Who can tell the pilgrim's feeling
When thy waters meet his sight?

All the deeds of sacred story,
All its marvels great and true,
All that gives the Jordan glory,
Rush upon his raptured view!

Like a wall, its wondrous waters
Shining rise, and solid stand,
Israel, till thy sons and daughters
Safely reach the Promised Land.

Pilgrim's garb aside now laying,
Let thy garments shining flow,

Spear and standard wide displaying,
  Army, forth with banners go!



The Fords of the Jordan.

Humbly to thy brink descending,
  Syria's proud lord was seen,
Seven times 'neath thy waters bending,
  Lo! the leper rises clean.

Symbol of the blood of Jesus,
  Shed upon the sacred tree,
This has made thy water precious,
  Jordan, and a joy to see.

Blood of cleansing, blood most holy,
Shed for sinners, shed for me,
Let me, like the leper, lowly,
Wash away my sins in thee.

Emblem bright of death's dark river,
Long I linger on thy shore;
All its waves can harm me never,
Now the Ark has gone before.

Anderson.

The Death of the Child Abijah.

"Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam."—1 KINGS xiv. 12, 13



HEN at the palace gates is heard the sound
Of thy returning feet—oh, heavy doom!
The child shall die, cut down in his sweet bloom;
But since "in him," and him alone, "is found
Some good thing," where iniquities abound—
One ray of light amid surrounding gloom—
A weeping people to a peaceful tomb
Shall bear him, and shall scatter flowers around.
Thus a child's doings are observed above,
And every holy thought or action pure
Attracts the notice and reward of love;
Nor let us deem a child's death premature,
But God's quick ripening of the young green ear
To golden glory under skies more clear.

Rev. R. Wilton.

Elisha's Chamber.

"And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither."—2 KINGS iv. 8-10.

"A LITTLE chamber" built "upon the wall"—
With stool and table, candlestick and bed—
Where he might sit, or kneel, or lay his head
At night or sultry noontide: this was all
A prophet's need: but in that chamber small
What mighty prayers arose, what grace was shed,
What gifts were given—potent to wake the dead
And from its viewless flight a soul recall!
And still what miracles of grace are wrought
In many a lowly chamber with shut door,
Where God our Father is in secret sought,
And shows Himself in mercy more and more;
Dim upper rooms with God's own glory shine,
And souls are lifted to the life divine.

Rev. R. Wilton.

The Shunammite.

"It is well."—2 KINGS iv. 26.

"I DWELL among mine own, and I am blest,
My husband, household, dear familiar friends;
I dwell among my people, and at rest,
Thankful to God for all His goodness sends;
I have enough, nay, more," she meekly cried,—
"I dwell among mine own, and I am satisfied."

Was there no boon a monarch could bestow,
Nought that a prophet might demand on earth,
Nothing to cause that cup to overflow,
So filled with brimming blessings from her birth?
"I dwell among mine own," she only said,—
"In this my happy home, and need no human aid."

Riches were hers, but she was blessed with more
Than those in earthly treasure affluent,
Or garners teeming with their ripened store—
A sweet and graceful spirit of content.
This was the great inheritance which Heaven
To the rich Shunammite had largely given.

One blessing long desired, but still denied,
  Was wanting to that house of peace and joy,—
She had no son. The blessing was supplied;
  The mother smiled upon her infant boy.
But He whose love the long-sought blessing sent
Now taught a higher lesson than content.

The blessing was recalled. The shades of death
  Closed the fair eyelids of the lovely child.
The mother felt that with his parting breath
  Earth of its sweetest blossom was despoiled;
But checked the strong temptation to rebel,
And said, in meek submission, "It is well!"

Oh, hard, sweet lesson! taught, my God, by Thee,
  Deeply to suffer, and breathe no complaint,
In resignation to Thy wise decree,
  With the true wisdom of this gentle saint.
How blest the lot, when in one heart unite
Faith and content, as in the Shunammite!

And I am blest, though poor; I also dwell,
  All loving, loved by all, "among mine own;"
And I have learned to answer, "It is well,"
  Under the deepest sorrow I have known.
Blest with true riches, in content of mind,
And the best happiness, a will resigned.

Rev. C. B. Tayler.



The Prophet guarded by Angels.

2 KINGS vi. 13—18.

SWORDS of fire around us play,
Shafts of flame around us fly;
Though no lightnings glare by day,
Though no meteor cross the sky.

In the sunniest summer noon
There is war amidst the calm;
In the loveliest beaming moon,
Adverse spirits working harm.

Fallen man to slay in soul,
Is the prize for which they fight;
Counter warrior-charges roll,
Demons dark with angels bright.

The swift artillery of heaven
Passes round us every hour,
Though to man it be not given
While on earth to see its power.

Yet the prophet's servant saw,
When the Syrian host assailed,
Every heavenly warrior
And bright encampment all unveiled.

So from yonder distant sky
All the conflict we shall view;
Turn and see the dangers fly,
And praise the God that led us through.

Edmeston.

"The Sign of the Prophet Jonas."

THE weltering "weeds are wrapt about his head,"
  And all God's angry waves and billows roll
  Above him; while upon his eyes and soul
Three days and nights presses a darkness dread.



Jaffa, the ancient Joppa.

When lo! a sudden ray from heaven is shed
  Through murky depths God's prisoner to console,
  And that mysterious living tomb control,
And call the prophet from his oozy bed,
Sign of the Son of man—for our sakes cast
  Into the heart of the tempestuous deep,
Where rolling waves of justice o'er him passed
  And rocked our Surety in a three days' sleep;
Till from God's face a gracious sunbeam fell,
And he awoke and rose—and all was well!

Rev. R. Wilton.

Death of Josiah.

"And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations."—2 CHRON. xxxv. 23-25.

JERUSALEM! Jerusalem!
Behold your vanquished king;
The fairest flower of David's stem
Is blasted in its spring.
Then spare not, spare not of your tears,
But let them freely flow,
Since sceptreless his hand appears,
And laurelless his brow.

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
Who now shall fill the throne?
Who wear the royal diadem
Of Jesse's righteous son?
Oh! weep for him who hath resigned
Thy sceptre, seat, and crown;
For where shalt thou a monarch find
Like him, of fair renown?

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
Thy gladsome psalms shall cease,
And thou shalt be the sport of them
Who scoff at Heaven's decrees,
Who laugh at thy Jehovah's name,
The great eternal ONE!

Yet worship an unhallowed flame,
  And bow to wood and stone.

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
  Weep for the royal dead,
And cast aside each costly gem
  That glitters round thy head.
In sackcloth and in ashes mourn
  Thy dark and cheerless gloom;
Behold thy monarch slowly borne
  To his ancestral tomb.

Anon.

The Death of Ahab.

By robe or plume or equipage of king
  All undistinguished, he eludes the eyes
  Of captains bent to o'erpower him or surprise:
When lo! an arrow from an unknown string
Drawn at a venture—on swift, silent wing
  Right to a crevice in his armour flies.
  God's word of doom had fallen, and no disguise,
No power or wisdom could a respite bring.
So in life's battle-field for each and all,
  Or soon or late, the cloud of doom will lower,
But not at random will God's arrows fall:
  What though concealed from man the place and hour,
Enough that all has been arranged by Him
Whose eyes for us with mortal mists were dim.

Rev. R. Wilton.

The Destruction of Sennacherib.

2 Kings xix. 35.

HE Assyrian came down, like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold,
And the sheen of his spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest, when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest, when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

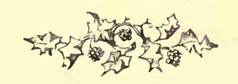
For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he past;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord.

Byron.



Uzziah.

"Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them. Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel. . . But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense."

2 CHRON. xxvi. 9, 10, 16.

THE star of Judah's king rode high in plenitude of power,
And lauded was his sceptre's sway in palace and in bower;
Fresh fountains in the desert waste up at his bidding sprung,
And clustering vines o'er Carmel's breast a broader mantle flung.
He hied him to the battle-field in all his young renown,
And wild Arabia's swarthy host like blighted grass fell down.

Yet when within his lifted heart the seeds of pride grew strong,
And unacknowledged blessings led to arrogance and wrong,
E'en to the temple's holy place with impious step he hied,
And with a kindling censer stood fast by the altar's side;
But he whose high and priestly brow the anointing oil had blest
Stood forth majestic to rebuke the sacrilegious guest.

"'Tis not for thee," he sternly said, "to tread this hallowed nave,
And take that honour to thyself which God to Aaron gave;
'Tis not for thee, thou mighty king, o'er Judah's realm ordained,
To trample on Jehovah's law, by whom thy fathers reigned.
Go hence!" And from his awful eye there seemed such ire to flame
As mingled with the thunder-blast when God to Sinai came.

Then loud the reckless monarch stormed, and with a daring hand
He swung the sacred censer high above the trembling band;
But where the burning sign of wrath did in his forehead flame,
Behold! the avenging doom of heaven, the livid plague-spot came,
And low his princely head declined, in bitterness of woe,
While from the temple gate he sped,—a leper, white as snow!

Mrs. Sigourney.

"Holy, Holy, Holy!"

ISA. vi. 3

HOLY, holy, holy Lord
God of hosts! when heaven and earth
Out of darkness, at Thy word,
Issued into glorious birth;
All Thy works around Thee stood,
And Thine eye beheld them good,
While they sang with sweet accord,
Holy, holy, holy Lord!

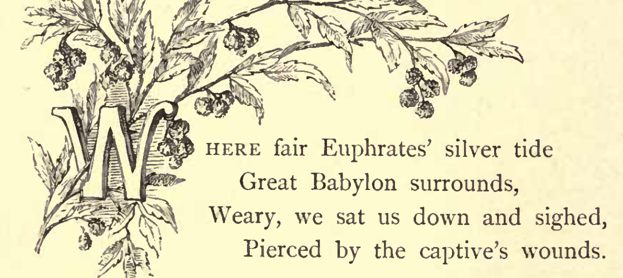
Holy, holy, holy! Three,
One Jehovah evermore,
Father, Son, and Spirit! we,
Dust and ashes, would adore.
Lightly by the world esteemed,
From that world by Thee redeemed,
Sing we here with glad accord,
Holy, holy, holy Lord!

Holy, holy, holy! all
Heaven's triumphant choir shall sing,
While the ransomed nations fall
At the footstool of their King:
Then shall saints and seraphim,
Harps and voices, swell one hymn,
Blending in sublime accord,
Holy, holy, holy Lord!

J. Montgomery.

The Mourning Captives.

"By the river of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."—PSA. cxxxvii. 1-6.



WHERE fair Euphrates' silver tide
Great Babylon surrounds,
Weary, we sat us down and sighed,
Pierced by the captive's wounds.

We wept as Memory's wand restored
The city of our sires,
And on the drooping willows hung
Our long-neglected lyres.

"Sing us a song!" our foes demand,
Though tears bedewed our eye;
"How can we teach a foreign land
Lost Zion's melody?

"How can we touch the chords of mirth?
What tones shall we employ?
While strangers waste our native earth,
How can we sing of joy?"

Mrs. Sigourney.



"HOW SHALL WE SING THE LORD'S SONG IN A STRANGE LAND?"

Weep for the Weepers.

OH! weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream;
Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell;
Mourn—where their God hath dwelt the godless dwell.

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet?
And when shall Zion's songs again seem sweet,
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leaped before its heavenly voice?

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest?
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country—Israel but the grave!

Byron.

The Vision of Belshazzar.

DAN. V.

THE king was on his throne,
The satraps thronged the hall;
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deemed divine—
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless heathen's wine!

In that same hour, and hall,
The fingers of a hand

Came forth against the wall,
  And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man—
  A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
  And traced them like a wand.

The monarch saw and shook,
  And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless waxed his look,
  And tremulous his voice.
"Let the men of lore appear,
  The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear
  Which mar our royal mirth."

Chaldea's seers are good,
  But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
  Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
  Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
  They saw—but knew no more.

A captive in the land,
  A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
  He saw that writing's truth.
The lamps around were bright,
  The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night,—
  The morrow proved it true.

"Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom passed away,
He, in the balance weighed,
Is light—and worthless clay.
The shroud his robe of state,
His canopy the stone;
The Mede is at his gate,
The Persian on his throne!"

Byron.

Daniel.

DAN. vi. 10.

IMPERIAL Persia bowed to his wise sway—
A hundred provinces his daily care;
A queenly city with its gardens fair
Smiled round him—but his heart was far away.
Forsaking pomp and power "three times a day"
For chamber lone, he seeks his solace there;
Through windows opening westward floats his prayer
Towards the dear distance where Jerusalem lay.
So let me morn, noon, evening, steal aside,
And shutting my heart's door to earth's vain pleasure
And manifold solicitudes, find leisure
The windows of my soul to open wide
Towards that blest city and that heavenly treasure,
Which past these visible horizons hide.

Rev. R. Wilton.

The Prayer of Daniel.

"O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because of our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. . . . At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."

DAN. ix. 16, 17, 23.

"O HOLY mountain of my God,
How do thy towers in ruin lie!
How art thou riven and strewn abroad
Under the rude and wasteful sky!"
'Twas thus upon his fasting day
The "man of loves" was fain to pray,
His lattice open toward his darling west,
Mourning the ruined home he still must love the best.

Oh, for a love like Daniel's now,
To wing to heaven but one strong prayer
For God's new Israel, sunk as low,
Yet flourishing to sight as fair,
As Sion in her height of pride,
With queens for handmaids at her side,
With kings her nursing-fathers, thronèd high,
And compassed with the world's too tempting blazonry!

'Tis true, nor winter stays thy growth,
Nor torrid summer's sickly smile;
The flashing billows of the south
Break not upon so lone an isle;

But thou, rich vine, art grafted there,
The fruit of death or life to bear,
Yielding a surer witness every day
To thine almighty Author and His steadfast sway.

Oh! grief to think that grapes of gall
Should cluster round thine healthiest shoot!
God's herald prove a heartless thrall,
Who, if he dared, would fain be mute!
E'en such is this bad world we see,
Which, self-condemned in owning Thee,
Yet dares not open farewell of Thee take,
For every pride, and her high-boasted reason's sake.

What do we then? if far and wide
Men kneel to Christ, the pure and meek,
Yet rage with passion, swell with pride,
Have we not still our faith to seek?
Nay—but in steadfast humbleness
Kneel on to Him, who loves to bless
The prayer that waits for Him, and trembling strive
To keep the lingering flame in thine own breast alive.

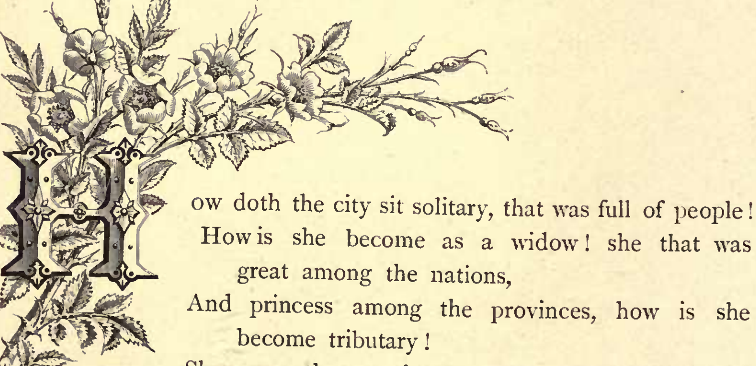
Dark frowned the future e'en on him,
The loving and beloved seer,
What time he saw, through shadows dim,
The boundary of th' eternal year;
He only of the sons of men
Named to be heir of glory then.[1]
Else had it bruised too sore his tender heart
To see God's ransomed world in wrath and flame depart.

[1] Dan. xii. 13. See Bp. Ken's Sermon on the Character of Daniel.

Then look no more, or closer watch
Thy course in earth's bewildering ways,
For every glimpse thine eye can catch
Of what shall be in those dread days:
So when th' archangel's word is spoken,
And death's deep trance for ever broken,
In mercy thou may'st feel the heavenly hand,
And in thy lot unharmed before thy Saviour stand.[1]

Keble.

Lamentation of Jeremiah over Jerusalem.



How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!
How is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations,
And princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!
She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks:
Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her:
All her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.

[1] Dan. xii. 13: "Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of
great servitude :
She dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest;
All her persecutors overtook her between the straits.
The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn
feasts :



All her gates are desolate : her priests sigh,
Her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.
Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper ;
For the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions :
Her children are gone into captivity before the enemy.

And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed:
Her princes are become like harts that find no pasture,
And they are gone without strength before the pursuer.
Jerusalem remembered, in the days of her affliction and of her miseries,
All her pleasant things that she had in the days of old,
When her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her:
The adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.
Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed:
All that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness:
Yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward.
Her filthiness is in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end;
Therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter.
O Lord, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath magnified himself.
The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things:
For she hath seen that the heathen entered into her sanctuary,
Whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation.
All her people sigh, they seek bread;
They have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul:
See, O Lord, and consider; for I am become vile.
Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me,
Wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

Lamentations i. 1–12.



The Old Men at the Second Temple.

EZRA iii. 12.

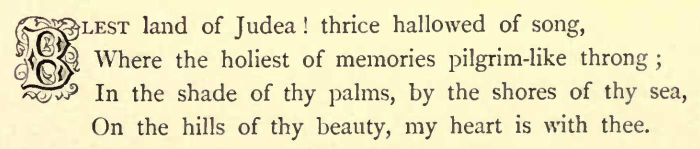
THEY wept, those aged patriots wept,
  The fame of vanquished years;
And burning thoughts, which long had slept,
  Now melted them to tears;
They well remembered Salem's state
Ere Babel laid it desolate.

They saw the second temple rise,
  But far less fair and bright;
And e'en their age-enfrozen eyes
  Dropped sorrow at the sight.
They thought of many a vanquished scene,
Of what they were, and what had been.

Captivity hath been their lot
  For many a lonely day;
Yet Salem cannot be forgot,
  Or memory pass away;
And memory told the tale too well,
For which their bitter teardrops fell.

H. Rogers.

Palestine.



BLEST land of Judea! thrice hallowed of song,
Where the holiest of memories pilgrim-like throng;
In the shade of thy palms, by the shores of thy sea,
On the hills of thy beauty, my heart is with thee.

With the eye of a spirit I look on that shore,
Where pilgrim and prophet have lingered before;
With the glide of a spirit I traverse the sod
Made bright by the steps of the angels of God.

Blue sea of the hills! in my spirit I hear
Thy waters, Gennesaret, chime on my ear;
Where the lowly and just with the people sat down,
And thy spray on the dust of His sandals was thrown.

Beyond are Bethulia's mountains of green,
And the desolate hills of the wild Gadarene;
And I pause on the goat-crags of Tabor to see
The gleam of thy waters, O dark Galilee!

Hark! a sound in the valley! where swollen and strong,
Thy river, O Kishon, is sweeping along;
Where the Canaanite strove with JEHOVAH in vain,
And the torrent grew dark with the blood of the slain.

There down from his mountains stern Zebulun came,
And Naphtali's stag, with his eyeballs of flame,
And the chariots of Jabin rolled harmlessly on,
For the arm of the Lord was Abinoam's son.

There sleep the still rocks and the caverns which rang
To the song which the warrior-prophetess sang,
When the princes of Issachar stood by her side,
And the shout of a host in its triumph replied.

Lo! Bethlehem's hill-site before me is seen,
With the mountains around and the valleys between;
There rested the shepherds of Judah, and there
The song of the angels rose sweet in the air.

And Bethany's palm trees in beauty still throw
Their shadows at noon on the ruins below;
But where are the sisters who hastened to greet
The lowly Redeemer, and sit at His feet?

I tread where the twelve in their wayfaring trod:
I stand where they stood with the chosen of God—
Where His blessings were heard, and His lessons were taught,
Where the blind were restored, and the healing was wrought.

Oh, here with His flock the sad Wanderer came—
These hills He toiled over in grief, are the same—
The founts where He drank by the wayside still flow,
And the same airs are blowing which breathed on His brow.

And throned on her hills sits Jerusalem yet,
But the dust on her forehead, and chains on her feet;
For the crown of her pride to the mocker hath gone,
And the holy Shechinah is dark where it shone.

But wherefore this dream of the earthly abode
Of humanity clothed in the likeness of God?
Were my spirit but turned from the outward and dim,
It would gaze, even now, on the presence of Him!

Not in clouds and in terrors, but gentle as when,
In love and in meekness, He moved among men;
And the voice which breathed peace to the waves of the sea,
In the hush of my spirit would whisper to me!

And what if my feet may not tread where He stood,
Nor my ears hear the dashing of Galilee's flood,
Nor my eyes see the cross which He bowed Him to bear,
Nor my knees press Gethsemane's garden of prayer:

Yet, loved of the Father, Thy spirit is near
To the meek, and the lowly, and penitent here;
And the voice of Thy love is the same even now
As at Bethany's tomb, or on Olivet's brow.



The Valley of Jehoshaphat.

Oh, the outward hath gone!—but, in glory and power,
The spirit surviveth the things of an hour;
Unchanged, undecaying, its Pentecost flame
On the heart's secret altar is burning the same!

Whittier.

The Burden of Babylon.

Isa. xiii.

O lift ye the banner on high o'er the mountain,
  Let the trumpet be loud, and the scimitar keen;
For Babel shall fall as a drop from the fountain,
  And leave not a trace where her glories have been.

The prince from his hall, and the serf from his labour,
  Shall gird on their mail, and wave high the war-sword;
But the hand shall relax from its grasp of the sabre,
  And the heart shall grow faint in the wrath of the Lord.

The moon in her light, and the sun in his splendour,
  Shall hide their pure ray from the proud city's fall;
While thick clouds of mist and of darkness attend her,
  And night wraps her streets like a funeral pall.

For the Medes from the north like a whirlwind shall gather,
  And Babylon yield to the might of the brave;
While the young blooming bride and the grey-headed father
  Shall lay their heads low in the dust of the grave.

Her halls shall be still, and their pavement be gory,
  Not a sound heard of mirth or of revelling there;
But the pride of the Chaldees, the boast of their glory,
  Extinguished like Sodom, be blasted and bare.

On the spot where thou raisest thy front, mighty nation,
  Shall the owl have his nest, and the wild beast his den;
Thy courts shall be desert, thy name Desolation,
  Now the tyrant of cities, the jest of them then!

G. Woods.

The Doom of Babylon.

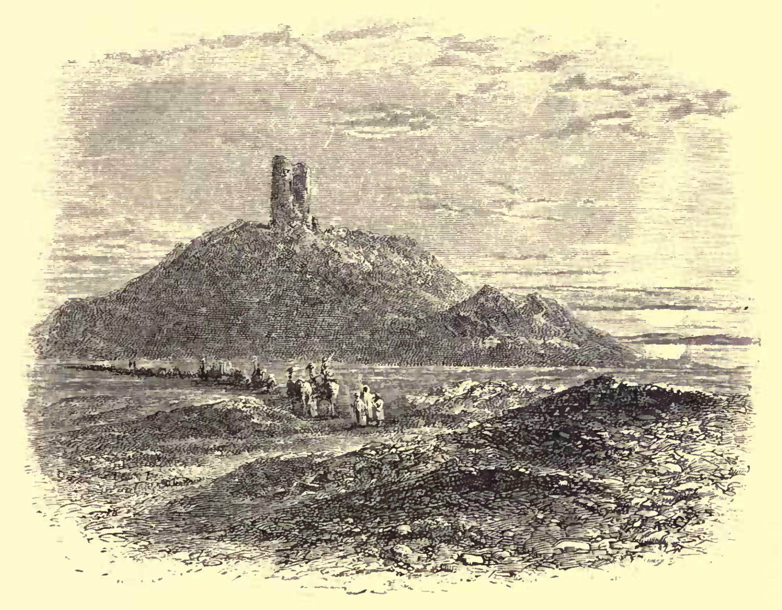
JER. li. 37—43.

FALLEN is stately Babylon!
Her mansions from the earth are gone,
For ever quenched, no more her beam
Shall gem Euphrates' voiceless stream.
Her mirth is hushed, her music fled,
All, save her very name, is dead;
And the lone river rolls his flood
Where once a thousand temples stood.

Queen of the golden East! afar
Thou shon'st, Assyria's morning star!
Till God, by righteous anger driven,
Expelled thee from thy place in heaven.
For false and treacherous was thy ray,
Like swampy lights that lead astray;
And o'er the splendour of thy name
Rolled many a cloud of sin and shame.

For ever fled thy princely shrines,
Rich with their wreaths of clustering vines;
Priest, censer, incense—all are gone
From the deserted altar-stone.
Belshazzar's halls are desolate,
And vanished their imperial state;
E'en as the pageant of a dream
That floats unheard on memory's stream.

Fallen is Babylon! and o'er
The silence of her hidden shore,
Where the gaunt satyr shrieks and sings,
Hath Mystery waved his awful wings.



The Ruins of Babylon.

Concealed from eyes of mortal men,
Or angels' more pervading ken,
The ruined city lies o'erthrown,
Her site to all but God unknown.

Anon.

The Burden of Tyre.

EZEK. XXVI.

IN thought, I saw the palace domes of Tyre;
The gorgeous treasures of her merchandise;
All her proud people, in their brave attire,
Thronging her streets for sport or sacrifice.
I saw her precious stones and spiceries;
The singing girl with flower-wreathed instrument;
And slaves whose beauty asked a monarch's price.
Forth from all lands all nations to her went,
And kings to her on embassy were sent.
I saw, with gilded prow and silken sail,
Her ships, that of the sea had government,
O gallant ships, 'gainst you what might prevail!
She stood upon her rock, and in her pride
Of strength and beauty, waste and woe defied.

I looked again: I saw a lonely shore:
A rock amid the waters, and a waste
Of trackless sand; I heard the black seas roar,
And winds that rose and fell with gusty haste.
There was one scathèd tree, by storm defaced,
Round which the sea-birds wheeled with screaming cry.
Ere long came on a traveller, slowly paced;
Now east, then west, he turned, with curious eye,
Like one perplexed with an uncertainty.
Awhile he looked upon the sea, and then
Upon a book, as if it might supply
The thing he lacked: he read, and gazed again;
Yet, as if unbelief so on him wrought,
He might not deem that shore the shore he sought.

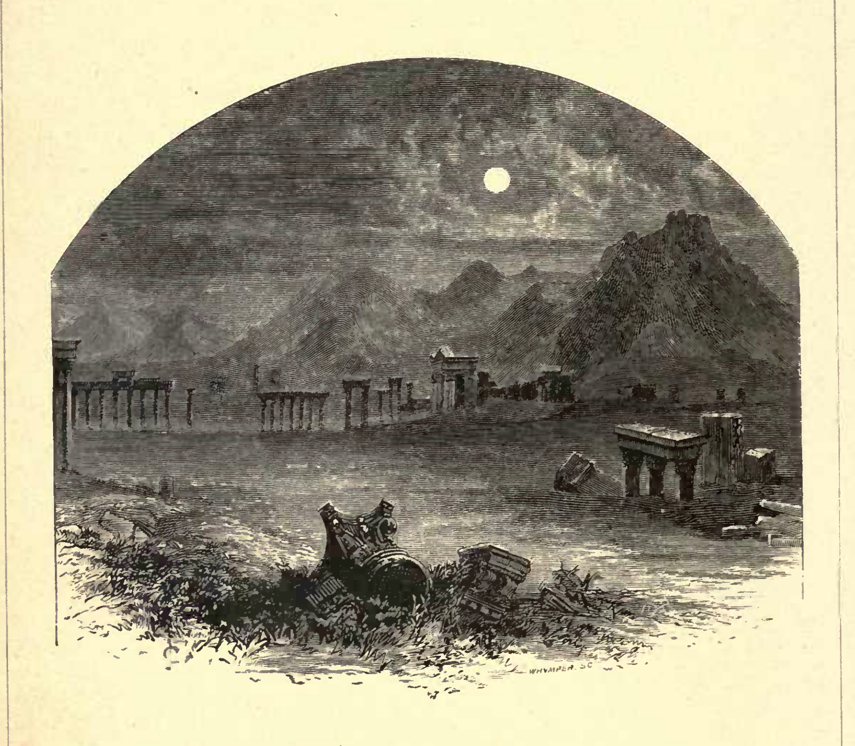
Again I saw him come: 'twas eventide;
  The sun shone on the rock amid the sea;
The winds were hushed; the quiet billows sighed
  With a low swell; the birds winged silently
  Their evening flight around the scathèd tree;
The fisher safely put into the bay,
  And pushed his boat ashore; then gathered he



The Ruins of Tyre.

His nets, and hastening up the rocky way,
Spread them to catch the sun's warm evening ray.
  I saw that stranger's eye gaze on the scene:
"And this was Tyre!" said he; "how has decay
  Within her palaces a despot been!
Ruin and silence in her courts are met,
And on her city rock the fisher spreads his net."

Mrs. Hewitt.



The Ruins of Palmyra.

SAD city of the silent place!
Queen of the dreary wilderness!
No voice of life, no passing sound
Disturbs thy dreadful calm around;
Save the wild desert dweller's roar,
Which tells the reign of man is o'er,
Or winds that through thy portal sigh
Upon their night-course flitting by!

The eternal ruins frowning stand,
Like giant spectres of the land ;
Or o'er the dead like mourners hang,
Bent down by speechless sorrow's pang ;
What time, and space, and loneliness,
All o'er the saddened spirit press !
Around, in leaden slumbers, lie
The dread wastes of infinity,
Where not a gentle hill doth swell,
Where not a hermit shrub doth dwell ;
And where the song of wandering flood
Ne'er voiced the fearful solitude.

How sweetly sad our pensive tears
Flow o'er each broken arch that rears
Its grey head through the mists of years !
And where are now the dreams of fame,
The promise of a deathless name ?
Alas ! the deep delusion's gone,
And all, except the mouldering stone.
The wreath that decked the victor's hair,
Hath, like his glory, withered there ;
And Time's immortal garlands twine
O'er desolation's mournful shrine,
Like youth's embrace around decline.

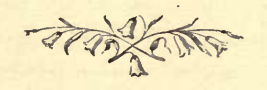
O'er Beauty's dark and desert bed
Ages of dreamless sleep have fled,
And in the domes where once she smiled,
The whispering weeds are waving wild ;
The prince's court is the jackal's lair,
He peeps through the time-worn windows there :

Broken the harp, and all unstrung,
Perish the strains the minstrel sung.
The moss of ages is their pall,
And dull oblivion hides them all!

Yet there, though now no mortal eye
Looks forth upon the earth and sky,
The evening star steals out as mild
Above the lone and mighty wild
As when young lovers hailed its light,
Far in the dark blue fields of night;
And dews as brightly gem the ground
As when a garden smiled around.

Go read thy fate, thou thing of clay,
In wrecks of ages rolled away;
Read it in this dread book of doom,
A city crumbled to a tomb!
Where the lorn remnants of the past
Shed deeper sadness o'er the waste,
Where Melancholy breathes her spell,
And chroniclers of ruin dwell.

Malcolm.



The Wild Gazelle.

THE wild gazelle on Judah's hills
  Exulting yet may bound,
And drink from all the living rills
  That gush on holy ground:
Its airy step and glorious eye
May glance in tameless transport by.

A step as fleet, an eye more bright,
  Hath Judah witnessed there;
And o'er her scenes of lost delight,
  Inhabitants more fair.
The cedars wave on Lebanon,
But Judah's statelier maids are gone!

More blest each palm that shades those plains
  Than Israel's scattered race;
For, taking root, it there remains
  In solitary grace:
It cannot quit its place of birth,
It will not live in other earth.

But we must wander witheringly,
  In other lands to die;
And where our fathers' ashes be,
  Our own may never lie:
Our temple hath not left a stone,
And mockery sits on Salem's throne.

Byron.

The Restoration of Israel.

'Tis eventide; the golden tints are dying
  Along th' horizon's glowing verge away;
Far in the grove the nightingale is sighing
  Her requiem to the last receding ray;
  And still thou holdest thy appointed way.
But Salem's light is quenched. Majestic sun!
  Her beauteous flock hath wandered far astray,
Led by their guides the path of life to shun;
Her orb hath sunk ere yet his wonted course
    was run.

In ages past all glorious was the land,
  And lovely were thy borders, Palestine!
The heavens were wont to shed their influence
    bland
  On all those mountains and those vales of
    thine;
  For o'er thy coasts resplendent then did shine
The light of God's approving countenance,
  With rapturous glow of blessedness divine.
And 'neath the radiance of that mighty glance
Basked the wide-scattered isles o'er ocean's blue expanse.

But there survives a tinge of glory yet
  O'er all thy pastures and thy heights of green,
Which, though the lustre of thy day hath set,
  Tells of the joy and splendour which hath been:
  So some proud ruin, 'mid the desert seen

By traveller, halting on his path awhile,
Declares how once beneath the light serene
Of brief prosperity's unclouded smile,
Uprose in grandeur there some vast imperial pile.

O Thou, who through the wilderness of old
Thy people to their promised rest didst bring,
Hasten the days by prophet-bards foretold,
When roses shall again be blossoming
In Sharon, and Siloa's cooling spring
Shall murmur freshly at the noontide hour;
And shepherds oft in Achor's vale shall sing
The mysteries of that redeeming power
Which hath their ashes changed for beauty's sunniest bower.

Thou hadst a plant of Thy peculiar choice,
A fruitful vine from Egypt's servile shore;
Thou mad'st it in the smile of heaven rejoice;
But the ripe clusters which awhile it bore
Now purple on the verdant hills no more;
The wild boar hath upon its branches trod;
Yet once again Thy choicest influence pour,
Transplant it from this dim terrestrial sod,
T' adorn with deathless bloom the paradise of God.

T. G. Nicholas.



Zion not Forsaken.

"Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise."—ISA. lx. 18.

HEAR what God the Lord hath spoken:
"O My people, faint and few,
Comfortless, afflicted, broken!
Fair abodes I build for you.
Thorns of heartfelt tribulation
Shall no more perplex your ways:
You shall name your walls Salvation,
And your gates shall all be Praise."

There, like streams that feed the garden,
Pleasures without end shall flow;
For the Lord, your faith rewarding,
All His bounty shall bestow.
Still in undisturbed possession
Peace and righteousness shall reign;
Never shall you feel oppression,
Hear the voice of war again.

Ye, no more your suns descending,
Waning moons no more shall see;
But, your griefs for ever ending,
Find eternal noon in Me.
God shall rise, and shining o'er you,
Change to day the gloom of night;
He the Lord shall be your glory,
God your everlasting light.

Cowper.

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